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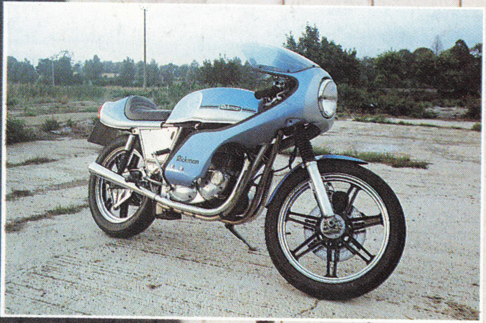
Rickman Triumph

(Another Ace Test)



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Silver MACHINE

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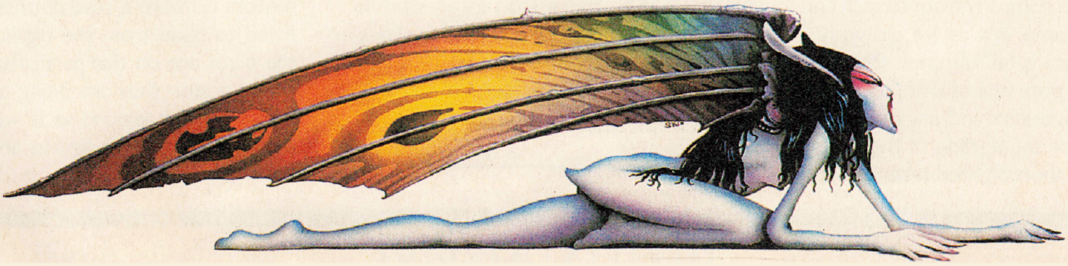


Newslines

Editorial

Those of you out there who know the chequered history of this here magazine will be familiar with changes in publishers, editors and editorial policies; so I'll skip the majority of the waffle that has been the hallmark of such announcements in the past and fill you in with the basics.

Silver Machine, and its stablemates from Advanced Publishing, have been taken over by Myatt McFarlane plc – the people who brought you *Back Street Heroes*, *Road Racer* and *Hog*. This will allow Advanced to concentrate on a wider selection of titles outside the realms of motorcycling, while giving Myatt McFarlane far greater resources: which should lead to far more informative and authoritative magazines, while retaining their independence.

And I've landed in the hot seat; which may sound glamorous and important to the uninitiated, but I can assure you that at the moment, with a half-finished magazine strewn across the desk and a deadline around the corner, is not a comfortable seat at all. Normally I'm a time served Beesa freak, occasional sidecar pilot, and the sort of bloke who gets his rocks off riding XS1100s round twisty country lanes.

Rick Kemp has taken a sideways step to the role of Associate Editor and, unburdened from the day-to-day responsibility for getting everything together in the right place at the right time, will be contributing to *Silver Machine* on a regular basis and keeping us up-to-date with developments in the south.

Editorially, what *Silver Machine* once was it may never be again. It will continue to take the British motorcycling heritage as its base – with particular reference to the days of our own home-grown heroes: the Rockers. Road tests will be few and far between, and will be written from a prospective owner/rider's point of view rather than a journo-hack's. Likewise, features on British tackle will not take the form of a motorcycling Financial Times, but will be informative and relevant to the people who **ride** the machines rather than hide them away under dust sheets. In short, *Silver Machine* will cover all aspects of what is involved in **riding** a motorcycle of any shape, size or description, whether it be British, Japanese, Italian, German, American, French (don't laugh) or East European.

So, if you've picked this magazine up to find out whether this month's model is a fraction of a second faster over a standing quarter mile than its predecessor, or to gain extra brownie points in the right social circles, you'd be as well putting it down now. If, however, you are reading this to reminisce about the old days, to catch up on a lost youth or in the hope of finding a voice of relative sanity in the cultural vacuum that has come to represent the 'mainstream' bike press: read on.

Andy Hornsby.

Italian Brits?

In a surprise announcement recently Gianfranco Castiglioni, boss of Italy's highly successful Ducati and Cagiva concerns, said that he intends to set up business in England. Castiglioni, who has brought about an almost miraculous change in the fortunes of Ducati over the last few years, thinks that he can do the same with our almost defunct bike industry.

Having recently returned to Italy from a visit to the National Motorcycle Musuem near Birmingham, Castiglioni said 'We would prefer to add one of the glorious names from Britain's motorcycle heritage to those we already own in Italy. But if necessary we will start our own company from scratch and build a marque name, just as we did with Cagiva.' Castiglioni is full of praise for what he call 'the huge potential of Britain's skilled and imaginative workers and engineers' and puts the blame for the decline of the British bike industry on short-sighted management.

So who has Castiglioni got his eye on? The rumours were that while in England he tried to buy the Norton bike business from Philippe LeRoux and/or Triumph from John Bloor, but it doesn't look like he was successful so perhaps we will see new Velocette or BSA singles on the roads before too long. One thing we do know is that Castiglioni is perfectly serious about his intention to set up shop in the UK and do for our industry what he did for the likes of Ducati.

Any News?

If you have anything people need to know about, we'd be more than interested to hear it so we can include it in Newslines in the future. Dead simple, just write it down on a piece of paper and send it to 'Newslines' at the usual address.

Barred

Team Silver Machine went for a drink the other night in Mortlake, south-west London. The plan was to alight on a small riverside pub very near a certain brewery and sip a couple after a refreshing ride along the river. But the plan failed; ordering three pints of the black stuff, the barman seemed unable to get our drinks. He could only say 'Sorry, we can't serve people with crash helmets and motorcycles'. 'Why not?' we not unnaturally asked, 'because we can't' was the brilliantly illogical reply. Tautologies eh, who needs them.

We asked for the manager. A man in his mid-thirties came and explained, very politely, that it was nothing against us personally – no, of course not – but he didn't want fifteen more coming down next week, 'once word gets round'. Word of what? That there's a pub in south-west London that *serves* you a drink? We left and found a perfectly friendly pub down the road – the Bulls Head incidentally – but resolved to ask a few questions. Is it company policy to ban, without warning, motorcyclists, or just that one pub? A phone call to the Area Manager of the brewery, Chef and Brewer, revealed that it was up to the individual managers of pubs to decide who and who not to serve. The Area Manager apologised for any offence given, but 'not knowing the circumstance . . . it was difficult to comment.' Thought it would be. 'Perhaps' he added 'the way you were dressed was not conducive to the sort of atmosphere he was trying to get.' The manager, he went on to explain, had to take into account other people's perceptions of people in motorcycle dress and as he was new to the pub, was 'very keen to stabilise the highest possible standards.' The Area Manager promised to look into the matter, which he should do – it turns out he's a motorcyclist.

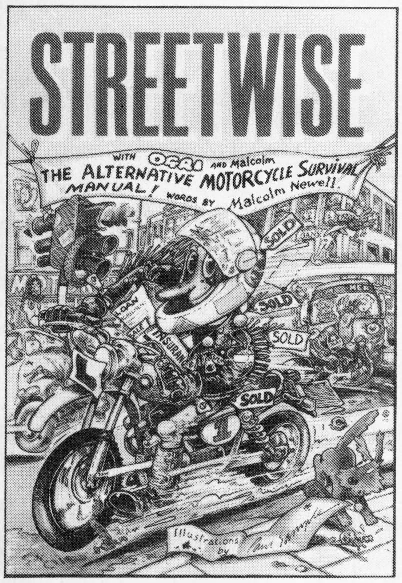
Bloor Triumphs On Show

Well, they are if you care to lurk on the A5 between Tamworth and Hinkley. At first glance you could be forgiven for thinking that they were Kawasakis, this is because they have Kawasaki tanks. Three and four cylinder models have been seen and the motors do have a resemblance to those fitted to bikes from the big K. Presumably the bikes are on this particular stretch of road because they are being tested at the MIRA proving ground so it won't be long before performance figures are 'leaked' to the Press.

Newslines

New Test

By the time this magazine comes out, a new second part of the motorcycle test will have been introduced. As from 2nd October we will no longer see examiners standing at the side of the road preparing to jump out in front of examinees, but will instead see them scooting around behind them, presumably on bikes themselves. Whether this is a good thing or not will become clear in time, but I'm looking forward to seeing how many examiners hold a full motorcycle license themselves. The only problem that arises from this change is that the test fee for part two will go up from £16.50 to £24.00 to account for the extra costs of the new system. The existing first test will continue as before but rumours are that that'll be changing next year into a compulsory basic training course for novice riders.



Streetwise

Streetwise is a new publication from Osprey which claims to be the alternative motorcycle survival manual. Written by Malcolm Newell with Ogri style illustrations from Paul Sample, it sets out the hazards and pitfalls facing the new rider. It starts at the beginning with how to convince one's parents that motorcycles aren't dangerous, smelly, dirty objects and runs through the maze of legislation and defensive riding techniques. Newell's somewhat anarchic style lightens what is an essentially boring subject and chapters like Practical Mind Games and Mental Deviations will strike a chord with bikers of any age and experience. As ever Sample's penwork brings a smile to the lips as Ogri and Malcolm do battle with the public at large. Loads of laughs and common sense for £4.95, can't be bad.

Motorcycling Heritage Taped

Rare films forming part of the largest collection in the world from the library of the Vintage Motorcycle Club, have been saved by transferring all the original footage onto Broadcast Standard Master Video Tapes.

A Staffordshire based video production company, Alphabet Communications, has been commissioned to carry out this highly skilled project.

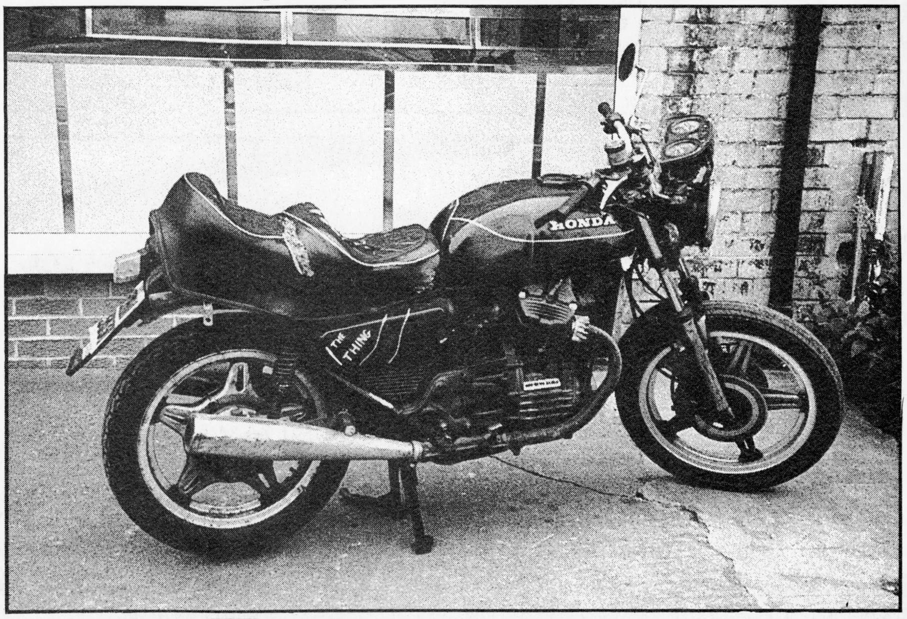
'Naturally we had to have complete confidence in the company we gave the contract to', said Geoff Davis of the VMCC, 'as many of the films dated back to pre-war days and are the only ones in existence. We selected Alphabet Communications because they have the experience and all the latest broadcast equipment in house to put our films onto Broadcast U-matic tapes. We can npw have VHS copies at very low cost for members to view on hoime videos, or club events, or even for members to start a private library.'

The films cover a wide spectrum of motorcycling: sporting events including the TT races; rallies; scrambles; trials; vintage runs and racing at Brands Hatch, together with films showing the making of motorcycles in pre-war days.

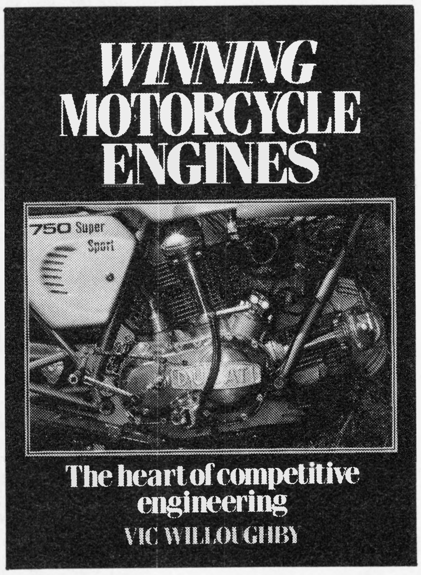
The club is so delighted with the project, that a one hour tape will be produced shortly, with edited highlights from the complete collection. This clearly will be a classic programme for every enthusiast to enjoy the nostalgia or an era when British machines and riders led the world.

Dog Of The Month

Check out that seat! This Dog obviously started life as a CX500 and is regular transport for 'Blackie', a highly respected member of the Hull Street Freaks. If you're wondering how we got this pic Blackie, ask your mate Dik.



Reviews



Winning Motorcycle Engines

by Vic Willoughby

Following on from *Classic Motorcycle Engines*, Willoughby sets out to look deeper into the hearts of some of the most successful performance engines of our time. Assisted by plenty of diagrams, engineering drawings and cutaways, he goes to great lengths to detail the struggle to create the ultimate racing engine, be it a humble MZ enduro motor, the disc-valved flat-four Fath, the Moto Guzzi V8 or the newer, and some would say more successful, Norton Rotary unit.

By nature of the machinery upon which this sort of attention is lavished, there is a leaning towards the more exotic bikes – if you can call an MZ exotic – but that doesn't detract from the book at all because a four stroke is always a four stroke regardless of its origins and therefore it must obey certain engineering principles common to that configuration. An excellent example of how this comes through are the chapters on the Norton Rotary engine and the Suzuki RE5 which go a long way towards explaining the reasons for the Suzuki's failure and, in turn, the Norton's success – as well as shedding a little light on the FIM's dilemma in trying to determine an appropriate capacity rating for any rotary powered bike. No doubt that's one battle that'll rage for a good while yet to come.

For my part, I thoroughly enjoyed this book, though I wouldn't recommend taking it to bed. Light reading it isn't. My brain had problems enough absorbing the salient points in all their intricacies when I was fully alert, and they lead to some monumental headaches as I struggled to grasp so many concepts that I'd successfully managed to leave well alone before.

Definitely a book for the technically minded. The man certainly knows his stuff

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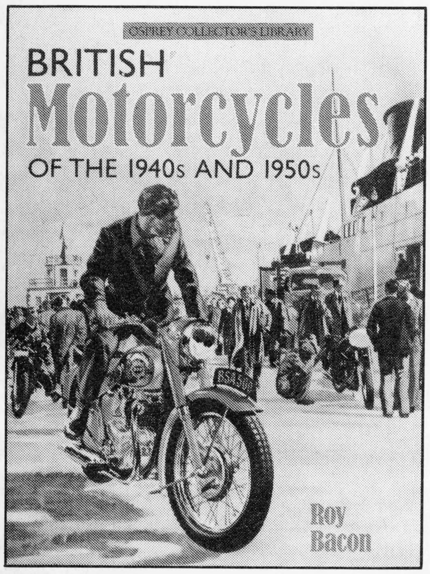

British Motorcycles of the 1940s and 1950s

by Roy Bacon

In this book, Bacon bridges the gap between his previous two volumes covering the decades of the '30s and '60s, thereby completing his trilogy with the sort of attention to detail that has become his trademark. The period covered within these pages perhaps gives him the best possibility to expand on the major developments made by our native motorcycle industry as it picked itself up out of the wreckage of the Second World War, and threw itself wholeheartedly into the most exciting and prosperous age of British Motorcycle development to date.

It would be all too easy to concentrate on the major marques and their achievements – as has been done so many times before – but, as ever, Bacon has been thorough in his groundwork and produced a very impressive encyclopedic catalogue of anyone and everyone who considered themselves a manufacturer of the time. As a result, a lot of the names will be unfamiliar but they are no less interesting for that, for it can often be the smaller operations that make the boldest forward steps within any industry – the Wooler beam engine is a case in point, albeit an unsuccessful one – and there is no shortage of information to keep the most knowledgeable entertained for hours.

Another of the author's trademarks, the comprehensive model listings, lurks at the back of the book and give an instant guide to who made what and when; again covering the whole spectrum of manufacturers and their complete model ranges. It is a shame that the listing cannot feasibly detail the full specification of all the models too, but then there should be more than enough there to confound your local Classic Bore in the 'they never made one of those' stakes.

All in all, a very well written reference book for enthusiasts and the curious, as well as being essential reading for those people who swallow the claims of the Japanese Ad men when they claim to have re-invented the wheel

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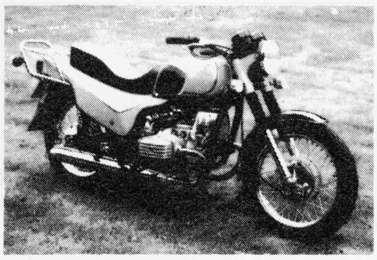

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Events

Newsline Events

The Southern Classic Bike Show moves venues this year to Kempton Park Racecourse. Due to be held on the weekend of November 11/12, the main hall in the grandstand will house the club and trade stands with the autojumble taking place both inside and outside. Added attractions will include the Wall of Death, Moto-ball matches, film shows and something for the children. Entry fees will be £2.00 per day with reductions for OAPs and children. Kempton Park is just off Junction 1 on the M3.

The Great London Autojumble will be happening at Picketts Lock Centre, Edmonton, London on Sunday October 29. Doors open at 10.30 and parking is free.

Planned to coincide with the Pioneer Run to Brighton on November 5 is the Brighton run Autojumble. As is the way of these things it's not being held in Brighton but at the South of England Showground, Ardingly, Sussex. The showground is located off the B2028 north of Haywards Heath and kick off time is 10.30.

The Motorcycle Riders Association will be holding their third Willie Feelers Rally over the weekend of November 3/4/5, the same weekend as the NEC Motorcycle Show. The location will be 'somewhere in darkest Warwickshire' and sound from the 50s, 60s and 70s blasting from the disco with a live blues band on Saturday night. Marquee, late bars and on-site catering will be available. If this sounds like your sort of fun, send £5.00 and sae to 3 Barton Road, Hill Top, Nuneaton, CV10 5BN.

Jampot Rally 1989

I wonder just what the residents of the Forest of Dean thought when some 500 British motorcycles descended upon them over the August Bank Holiday. They were certainly surprised; you could see that in their faces as they contemplated the bunches of riders, bellowing at one another over the noise of their engines and through their helmets, who gathered at every junction, lay-by and petrol pump. Some loved it – there were many smiles. Others weren't sure, and stood about looking perplexed. A few appeared to hate every minute of the long weekend; showing their displeasure and immaturity by carving riders up, driving down the middle of the forest roads and scowling a lot.

The event? Oh, it was the Jampot Rally; the annual gathering of the AHS & Matchless Owners Club, their families, friends and motorcycles.

Club annual rallies are big affairs these days, and have grown almost beyond recognition from the simple days of yore when a few tents would appear in a field, and a few hardy souls would sit around a campfire, singing songs and swapping yarns into the small hours. Some riders (and it usually is the *riders,* rather than the trailer folk) miss the old days, and some clubs, like this one, also put on a second annual rally just for those who enjoy getting wet and cold. AMC owners call this their Alternative Jampot, and cars are banned from the site, as are bikes other than AJS & Matchless.

However, it is the Big One we are talking about here, and big it certainly was. The Sunday morning road run (another traditional feature) involved well over two hundred AMC bikes, rumbling and snorting their way through this beautiful corner of Gloucestershire. If the sight was impressive, the sound was just incredible – all those snarling twins and crackling singles beating through the August sunshine! As is the case every year, bemused locals turned out in flocks to watch the procession, which took almost a quarter of an hour to pass. Even those whose journeys had been interrupted as they were obliged to wait at road junctions, just turned off their car engines and watched with (mostly) smiles on their faces as the convoy rode through. Their kids grinned and waved like mad – and got many waves back.

Rallies are like this, aren't they? Even club members who habitually drive the company Cavalier or the oh-so-practical BMW just *have* to get their AMC bike out for the rally. Those who have not ridden a motorcycle for the twelve months since the last rally can be seen wobbling determinedly down the roads of the campsite. Every time they see family or friend, they feel obliged to give the throttle that little extra tweak – and many are the hilarious antics which result. This circus routine is best observed in those who are lucky enough to own real scrambles bikes or rorty CSR twins, when the sudden roar, the sudden cloud of dust followed by the sudden silence usually means that someone's going to be nursing some bruises!

For those who actually enjoy riding their bikes, the organising Bristol section of the Club had laid on several smaller runs. These included green lane runs for those who enjoy getting wet and falling off, and one route up to the Heads of the Valleys where the true magnificences of the south Wales scenery was ours to appreciate.

The organisers provide a trial – for those of heroic tendencies – which was as close fought as club events always are. Choice of machinery can always be seen to be completely separate to the ability of the rider, and converted road bikes are often to the fore in the results, with genuine factory comp machinery left floundering behind.

I could blather on about the joy of a few pints among friends in the summer sunshine; about the constant rumble of big Brit bikes at work and play; about Saturday evening festivities and Sunday concours judging; but I'm sure that you get the picture.

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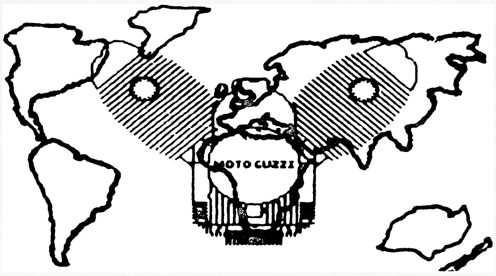

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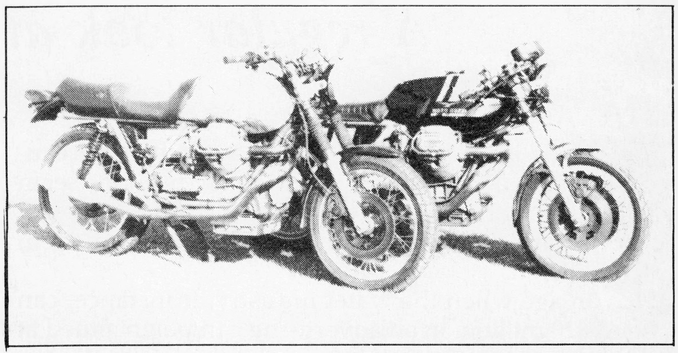

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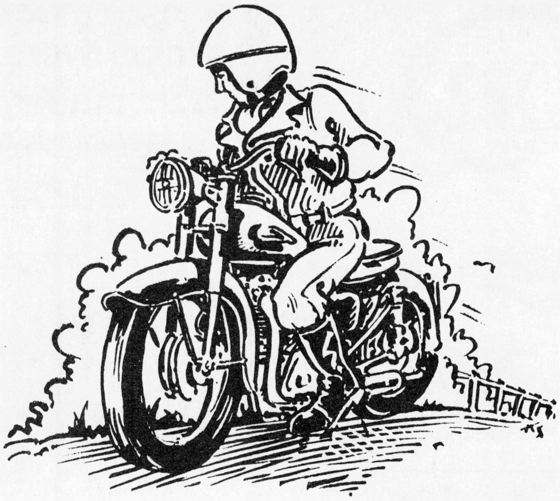

Down The Road Apiece

Steve Wilson

A regular look at people and events

This is, as we all know, an age when Bureaucrats Rule OK – when the faceless ones seem to work happily on the principle that if you can't blind 'em with science, then baffle 'em with bullshit.

It's an age when the water industry, fr'instance, can spend £20 million on an advertising campaign aimed at conveying that they're doing us a *favour* in providing at rapidly increasing cost a barely palatable version of what up till now has been regarded as a pretty basic human right – and then proclaim with a perfectly straight face that *of course* their nice campaign has nothing *whatsoever* to do with the intended sell-off of the industry to the private sector . . .

And so on. But in such an age, it's refreshing to meet someone who has gone beyond the stage of general bafflement and anger which most of us feel and which all too often subsides into a gloomy apathy, to target a specific piece of bureaucratic tomfoolery and do something about it.

The man is Alan Abrahams, who until recently was the Secretary of the British Two-Stroke Owners Club. And the pen-pushers' stroke in question is the one which separates you from your old motorcycle's original registration number, unless you have a V5 registration document for it. This went down in November 1983, and because there was, to my knowledge, little effective pubicity preceding the move, many riders still do not know that it happened, or if they do, what was involved.

The centralized DVLC in Swansea had replaced the local vehicle licensing offices as the authority for issuing registrations and road tax in the early Seventies – just by coincidence, no doubt, at a time when counter-insurgency authorities in Northern Ireland were keen to have systematic computerised analysis of vehicle ownership and movement in the United Kingdom.

What happened in 1983 was that the DVLC 'closed the record'. They declared that if you had an old vehicle, off the road, with only an old-style buff or green fold-out log-book, unless you had heard about the recall and got your vehicle and its number registered on an equivalent V5 registration from Swansea, the old registration number was lost to you.

This may seem no big deal, but two factors made it potentially important – history and money. In the old registration numbers, the last two letters of the three letter parts of the registrations were not chosen at random, but told you the area or the registration authority where it had been issued. Taking away the number separated the bike from its history. And the DVLCs V5 document, unlike the old fold-out log books with their record of each owners name and address, provides few details about a machine's previous keepers. Once the original registration number has gone, there is no longer even any way to check with the records of old bike registrations now held by the London Science Museum, which can sometimes indicate where and to whom a machine was first sold.

But even if you're not too bothered about your bike's provenance, you probably are about what it's worth. Substitute Q-suffix registrations were at first offered by Swansea, which are issued also when a machine is imported from abroad second-hand, or when a frame (which for registration purposes represents the vehicle) is fitted with a different engine. But Q-numbers definitely lower a machine's re-sale value.

The DVLC did not prove inflexible, though, and agreed in conjunction with the Local Vehicle Licensing Offices to issue 'age-related' numbers to roadworthy vehicles which had lost their original registration when the records closed ie if your Bantam had had a J-suffix to indicate its year as 1970-71, they would issue you with a J-suffix number; or if it had been registered before February 1963 (or rather later, for Scotland), and so had a registration of two or three letters plus three or four numbers, with no suffix, they would issue you with something similar.

Similar, but not the same. The 'age-related' pre-suffix numbers come from a pool of unissued registrations from the remoter areas of Scotland, so their second letter is invariably 'S', a dead giveaway, even before the reissued registration document is perused, that the number is not the original one. On a desirable machine, this fact can lower its re-sale price by a couple of hundred pounds.

And that's before the re-sale value of an original pre-'63 numberplate is taken into account. You may or may not approve of the trade in 'cherished' numbers which an anomaly in the law allows to be transferred from motorcycles to cars (but not vice-versa). But with closing the records having diminished the pool of numbers by what dealers reckon is about half, today any pre-suffix number is worth at least £200-£300 to an owner selling it via a dealer, and in some cases a good deal more.

But if you accept the situation you will be happy enough, as I was with my V5-less BSA, to complete a V65 form, have the LVLO chappie come and check your bike's engine and frame numbers, and then get a Club, a classic magazine or an accredited expert to provide a letter to the DVLC confirming the bike's age and authenticity, after which hopefully an age-related number is issued.

It was at the latter stage that Alan Abrahams came into the picture, for as the Two-Stroke Club Secretary he soon had to field literally dozens of requests from members wanting either age-related numbers or better still, the original retained.

Swansea will re-issue the original number – and if they can do it for some, why not for all? – in the case of a machine with a place in motoring history, like a racer, or one of verifiable special rarity interest ie a machine of which not too many other examples survive (less than a hundred seems to have been the rule of thumb.)

Now several British two-strokes fall into the latter category – seen many Dunkley Whippets lately? – and when Alan was pursuing early requests for keeping an original number, he noticed that the next stage involved the DVLC writing back to say that 'first we need to know how many of these machines are in existence' – and could Alan please tell them?

Hang about, thought Alan, surely that's *their* pigeon, as any registered examples would be on their computer. But when he pointed this out, the reply was that 'due to the way the information is entered in the computer, it is difficult to retrieve that information.'

In other words, as already suspected by we anti-computer Luddites – no hacking for *this* hack – the information is there, but irretrievable and thus unusable, and in the meantime the Swansea civil servants expect voluntary bodies like the Clubs to do their work for them. A little more thought and Alan, like the boy in the story of the Emperor's new suit of clothes, came to consider the whole rigmarole – something superfluous which cost the private citizen unjustifiable amounts of time, trouble and money – because the DVLC had no right to the original numbers, and their 1983 action had in his opinion been illegal.

He has not been backward in putting his point of view quite forcefully to Swansea. What follows is a sample letter sent to one of their 'We need to know how many are still in existence' replies. The machine in question? One of the joke-trikes which helped bring down the BSA group – an Ariel-3. But be it Norman Nippy or Vincent Black Prince, Alan believes the number belongs to the owner:

In past correspondence with DVLC I have pointed out that the idea that a Club such as ours can have any accurate or definitive idea of the numbers of any model extant is completely ridiculous, that statistic being your responsibility and precisely the figure that your computer ought to be able to cough out in seconds. The fact that the DVLC has chosen to neglect its responsibility in maintaining a full record of the nation's vehicle population is, in my view, scandalous and might well have serious legal implications, not least in view of the lucrative trade in registration numbers that has arisen.

I resent the apparent view that our Club and its officials are considered a cheap source of information for your department. Perhaps I should levy a charge for the dozens of letters that I have had to provide on our members behalf, providing irrelevant details to compensate for the inadequacies of your records.

Mr Baker's machine in one of less than a dozen known to this club. Being motorcycle 'curious' these machines tend to change hands frequently and are rarely used on the road due to their limited capabilities. One example has changed hands four times at least in the past three years. Consequently our record cannot be regarded as accurate. The registration number in question is not in the least valuable on the market and hardly merits the time wasted in this correspondence.

If your records do not show any great numbers of this model it must be considered rare since yours is the definitive record, inadequate as it may be. I suggest you supply Mr Baker with his V5 without further delay in order that he be able to use the machine.

Now in case you think straight talk like that to bureaucrats might be counter-productive, it's interesting to note that in several years as Secretary, Alan was hardly ever refused, and nearly always *got original numbers back.* He believes this is because the Centre is on shaky ground legally. 'If people would realise and say they won't accept any other number but the one that's right for their machine,' he reckons, 'Swansea have to give in.'

This view is endorsed by another Two-Stroke Club stalwart, Dave Benson, who has had the experience of seeing the number 63 ABC, off a rare Royal Enfield 'Big Head' 500 Bullet which he used to own and sold complete, driven by him at Marble Arch attached to a Mercedes. 'This all goes together,' said Dave, patting his two-stroke Royal Enfield, 'the number, the Turbo Twin, and me.' (At which point a cynical onlooker asked 'So if I buy the bike I get you? You'll never sell it.')

Crunch time on the crucial question of whether or not the DVLCs original 1983 action was legal will only come when someone takes a test case all the way through the courts. We'll let you know how it pans out, but in the meantime Alan's attitude is an encouragement to people who would like to pull the plug on the rising tide of untreated bureaucratic sewage that's threatening to choke us all.

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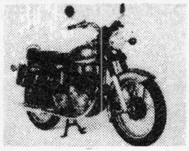

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Despatches

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Help!

I am writing to you in the hope that you will print my letter in your magazine, partly to help me in my quest and partly to show just how far our mutual madness can take us.

My problem is thus – I have this insane desire to ride to Italy next summer on my as yet nowhere-near completed Clubmans DBD34. The madnes sis that I KNOW it's not a very comfortable long-distance tourer (never mind, think of those lovely windy Alpine roads as you cross over the Col du Grand Saint Bernard!). I KNOW that if it breaks down I'll probably be up Sh*t Creek without a proverbial (it's all right, I'll take out the AA 5 Star!). I KNOW it might get stolen if I actually RIDE IT ON THE ROAD (don't worry, it's not for shows anyway, and I'll be well insured), and besides, it might rain on the way back.

Is there anyone out there who can help me? Does anyone understand what I'm going through? Any suggestions, helpful or otherwise, will be gratefully lapped up or ignored. Surely I can't be the FIRST!

RICHARD CHEETHAM

London E17

Mugger

I am writing to ask you if you do an advertising mug or cup. I have started to read Silver Machine because of my love of bikes. I still find it hard to believe that Brit bikes are so expensive to buy; I would dearly love to own one. Silver Machine is the best mag I have seen for a long time. Anyway back to my original request. My other hobby is collecting mugs especially advertising ones, please let me know if you have any.

A J

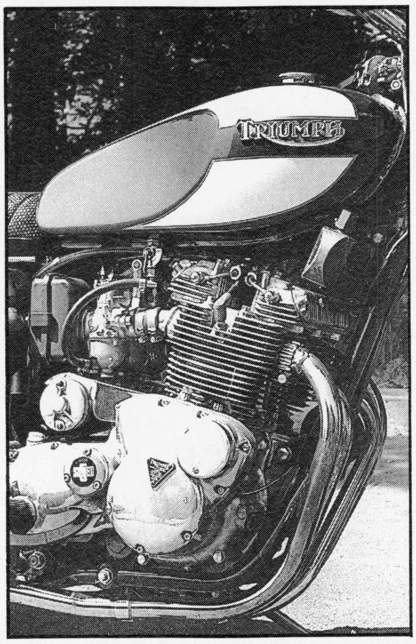
Manchester

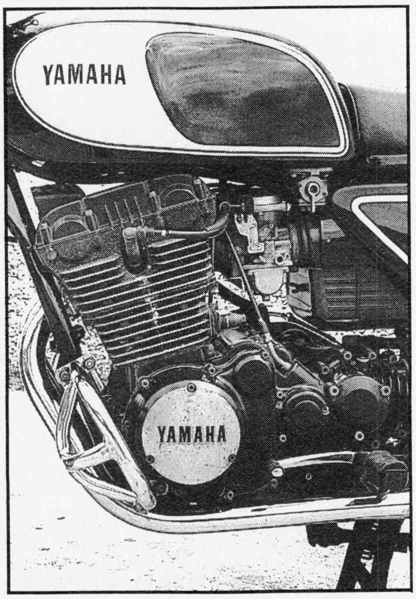
(No mugs here – RK)

Balderdash

Your comparison of the Triumph Trident and Yamaha XS750 was pretty fair, except for a few points. The paragraph that spreads from page 13 to 14 and the following two are utter balderdash.

For a start, the triple is *not* 'basically . . . a 500 twin with an extra cylinder'. This is a myth repeated by people, usually journalists, talking through orifices other than their mouths until it has become accepted as fact. I actually own both a Trident and a Daytona and I can assure anyone that wants to know that the engines owe virtually nothing to each other. They may *look* the same, but that is a marketing device, currently being used by Honda for their VFR750F and NS125R, and no one seriously suggests a VFR engine is four NS engines (do they)?





Secondly, the 'management malaise' that delayed the triples had nothing to do with Norton Villiers Triumph. The Trident and Rocket 3 appeared in 1968, and they did appear before the CB750; NVT didn't even exist until 1973! No, simply it had to do with the fact that most of BSA-Triumph's decision makers of the mid-sixties couldn't tell their arses from a hole in the ground.

Thirdly, you seem rather confused about the Quadrant. It was built only to prove a concept – that of an across the frame four cylinder motorcycle. Because of the triple's engine construction some triple components were used in the Quadrant engine. Because of this, later it proved easiest to use Rocket 3 cycle parts. If you actually go to the National Motorcycle Museum and examine the Quadrant you will see that it could not possibly have been sold to the public in the existing form.

Next, 'the . . . Trident motor had the same internal dimensions as the 500'. Rot. As you go on to state correctly, the triple's are 67×70mm but Triumph never marketed a 500 with these dimensions. You said at the beginning of the article that it was something you've always wanted to do – it's a shame that some of the time wasn't spent doing a little research. I appreciate that you cannot know everything about motorcycling history, but such basic cock-ups hardly engender confidence in your writings. May I suggest Bert Hopwood's 'Whatever Happened to the British Motorcycling Industry' should be required reading?

Finally, to switch to the XS750, I notice you make no mention of the model's well recorded penchant for blowing up right angle gearboxes. In the early 80s it was said that no breaker anywhere could supply a secondhand right angle gearbox.

STUART MacAULEY

Harrow, Middx

Gratuitous Fan Mail

Nice to see a mag out somewhere between the dried classic bike mags and the boozy, sexist type. Anyway, I'm looking for the address of the Triumph Owners Club. I've bought just about every bike mag on the shelf and they have just about every owners club apart from the Triumph Owners club, the one I want. Much obliged if you could help me out.

EMMA KAYE

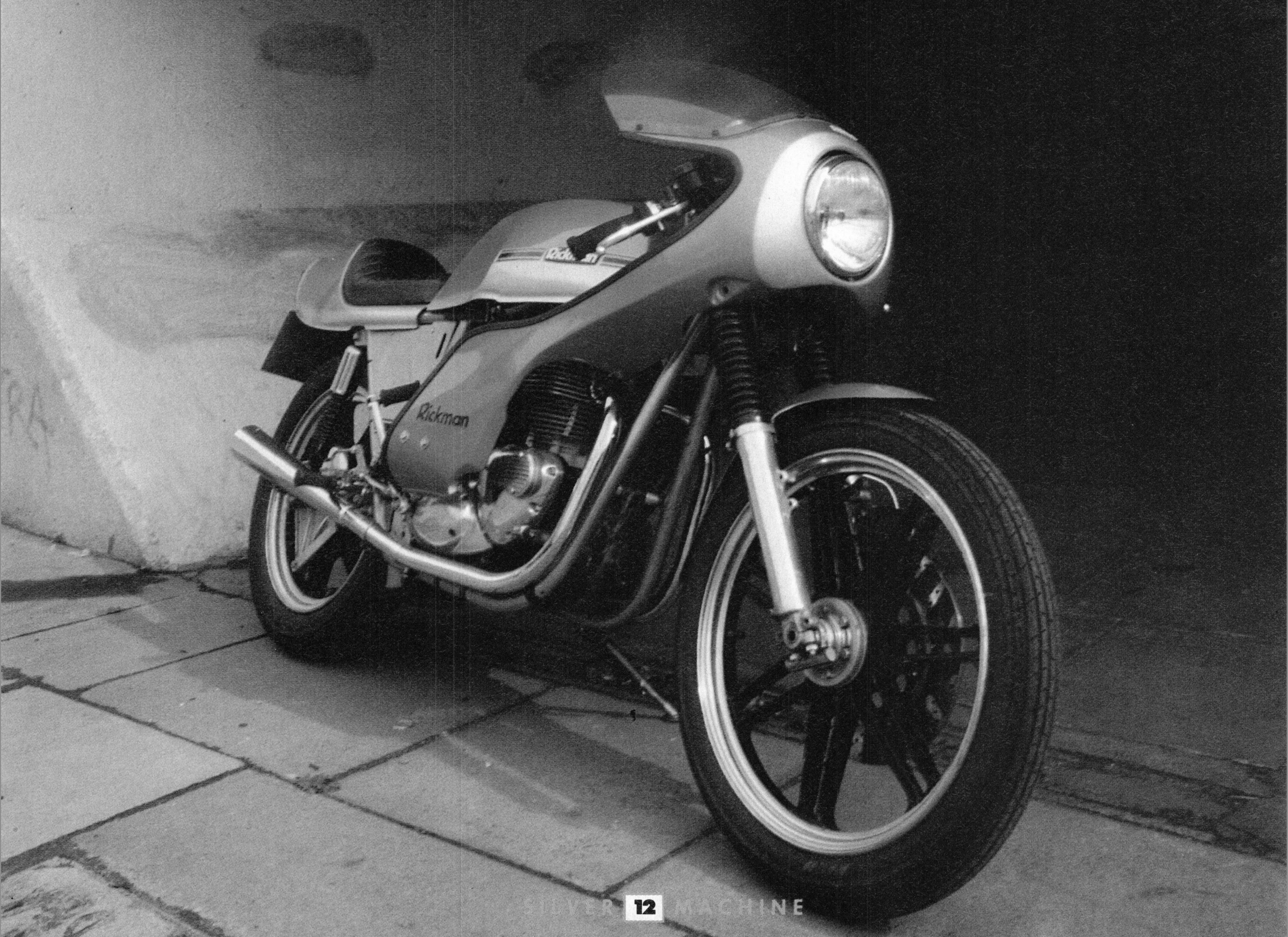
South Brent, Devon

(The address you want is the Triumph Owners Motorcycle Club, 4 Douglas Avenue, Harold Wood, Romford, Essex, there you go.)

ace test

8-Valve Rickman Triumph

Rick Kemp gets to grips with the Triton's Successor


Rickman
Rickman

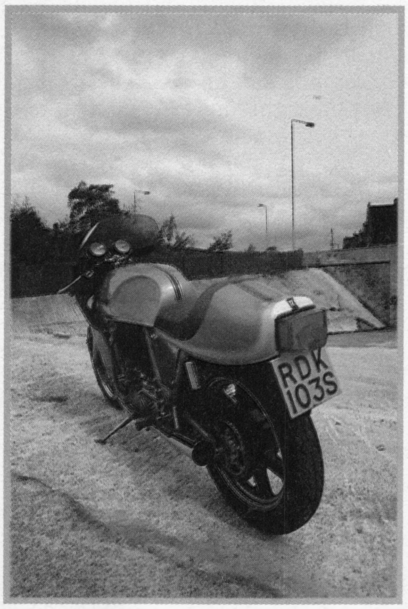
The Rickman brothers, Derek and Don have done many things for motorcycling over the years. Apart from being pretty useful riders in their own right they established a company to manufacture and supply the motorcycle industry with specialist items. This was done at a time when most retired successful competition riders opened shops at best, wrote books or disappeared into obscurity. The company has remained successful throughout a long period of fluctuating motorcycle sales including the complete demise of the domestic industry.

Adapt, adopt and improve they have certainly done but apart from this, they have been innovative which has been part of the key to their survival. Well known for their glass fibre ware for British machines, they soon adapted to the Japanese machines supplying fairings, panniers and top boxes for just about everything going. But perhaps their biggest coup in this field was to get the manufacturing contract for Honda-style which gave Rickman an almost official stamp as far as Honda owners were concerned. This also provided the money to carry on developing new lines which the smaller manufacturers couldn't do (remember all those people who made single skin versions of BMW's RS fairing and tried to adapt them to fit every Jap bike?).

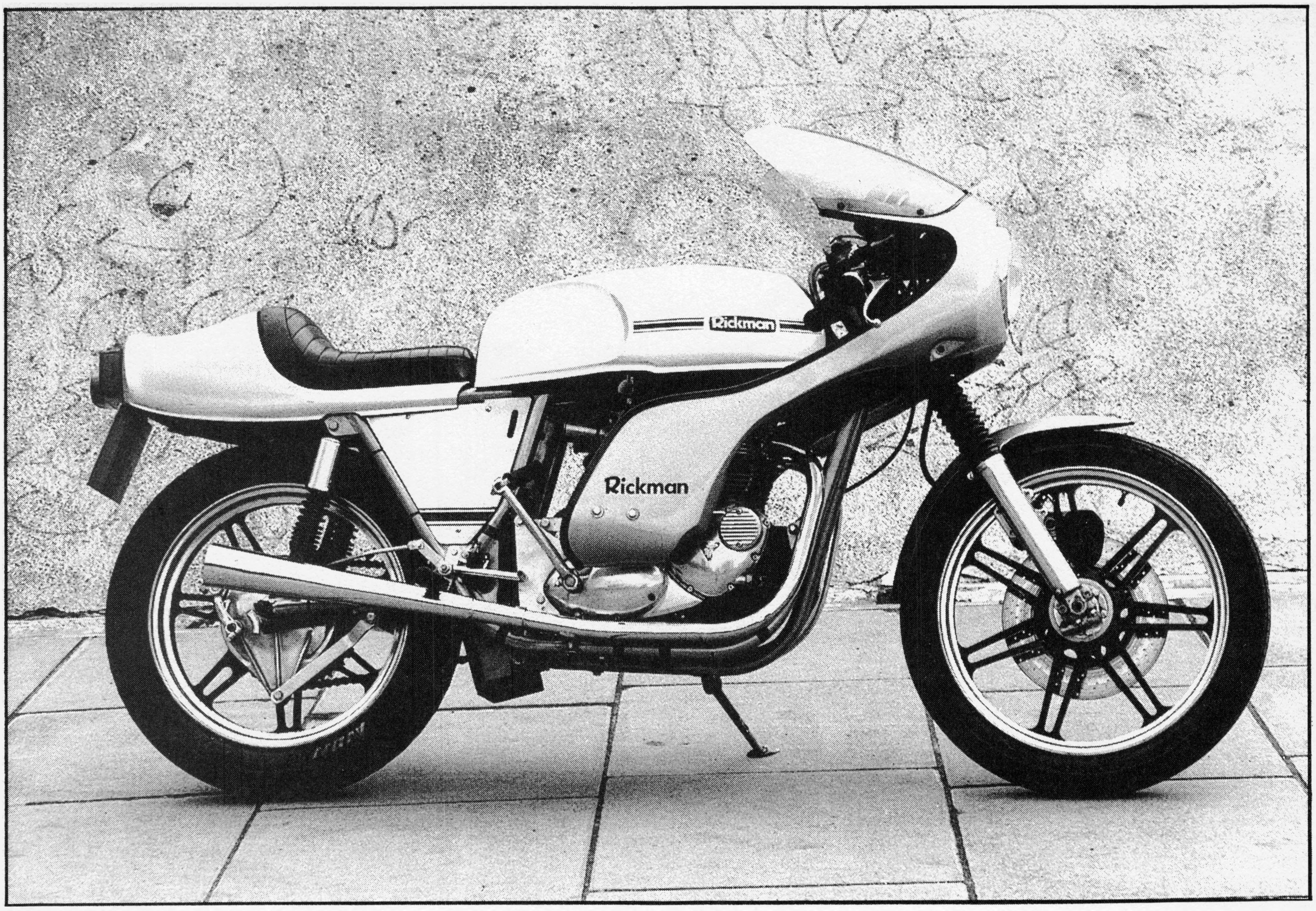
But alongside and prior to, all this software, they also produced the hard stuff, the stuff that's made from Reynolds tubing and nickel-plated frames. This stemmed from the brothers' involvement in first trials then motocross. Their participation in the latter led them to the conclusion that motocross machines of the day could be improved upon, imagine riding the BSA A10 at 60mph over rough ground and you'll have some idea of what they were up against. Basically what they did was to build a Tribsa with Norton forks. The pre-unit Tiger 100 motor was used with a BSA box, wheels and hubs also came from BSA. The name Metisse was given to their creation being French for mongrel bitch, it sort of sounds better in French doesn't it?

The step from assembling other peoples components to making their own was forced on them by the rest of the industry who withdrew their supply as soon as they realised that their own sales were being affected by the Rickmans' product. The fact that Don had come third in the World Championship on one of his own bikes without competing in all the rounds, only rubbed salt into the wound. Rickman offered their frames to any British manufacturer who was interested. With their usual blinkered vision, none were. So Rickman had to go it alone and expanded into road racing. A collaboration with Dave Degans led to the Dresda Rickman, a variation on the Dresda Triton for which he had become well known.

This was probably the first the average biker in the street had heard of Rickman. Soon there were street kits available and I for one remember thinking at the time that crashing my Triton wouldn't be such a bad thing because maybe I could get a Rickman chassis on



Rickman
Rickman



the insurance. There was no way I could've afforded one otherwise. As with most specials, Triumph power provided the motive force for most of the Rickman chassis running around the streets: though there was a batch of Rickman Interceptors built using the Royal Enfield 750 MkIII engine. These bikes had a less attractive tank/seat unit than the bike tested here but had the distinction of being fitted with a disc brake at either end – a big deal in 1970. If anyone's got one of these machines, we'd be keen to feature it. Most of the Interceptors were punted out by Elite Motors of Tooting, London.

Triumph powered Rickman's had some further development at the end of the '60s, with the company offering Weslake developed heads for sale. Our test machine is perhaps the most modern example of that same theme. It was recently built by Terry Hobbs down in Plymouth after he'd bought it with a seized 650 lump from a soldier based in Germany. Out came the 650 engine and in went a 750, eight-valve, five speed TSS motor. But not before it had been worked on a little. The cylinder head was flowed and polished, the cams were changed and secret mumbo jumbo performed with the electronic ignition and valve timing. The TSS's barrels have Nickasil bores made in Italy and was in most respects Meriden's most modern motor. Before installing the motor some cosmetics were carried out. Head and barrels bead blasted but with black rocker boxes and pushrod tubes. Crank and gearbox cases are also finished in black with all outer covers highly polished.

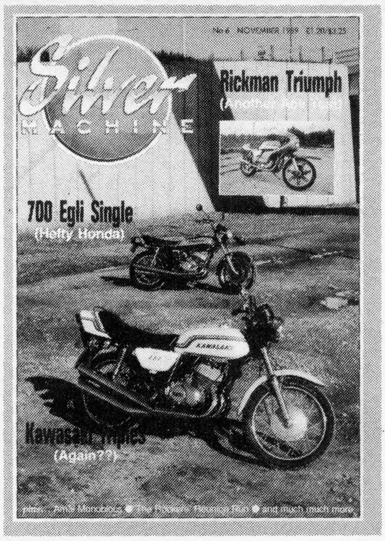
The Rickman frame is still a work of art. A simple duplex cradle with a triangulated rear sub frame made from Reynolds 53I, bronze welded and nickel plated. The tubular swingarm is eccentrically mounted at the pivot for chain adjustment. This is the only area which is below par by modern standards. The rest of the frame could handle twice the power but the relatively lightweight swingarm would flex. Rickman did produce their own fork but in most cases if bought as a frame kit other forks would be fitted, in this case the slightly odd choice of early Honda items including single sprung caliper disc and the instruments. Cast alloy wheels from Cambray are fitted and the rear drum brake plate is another Honda part, but in polished alloy it looks right.

Oil-in-frame concepts aren't new by any means but the Rickman version contains a certain amount of lateral thought. Just fill the frame with oil, why not? No specially large diameter top tubes or front down tubes here! The down tubes have a balance pipe across and breathers are fitted to the top rails. One of the cross brace tubes under the seat is threaded for a filler cap and the return oil hose. The feed side comes off another cross tube, this time under the engine. Oil level can be checked through a view tube mounted on the rear frame rail. One advantage of this system must be cooling and another is the lack of an oil tank, all the electrical components can be mounted under the seat out of the way. Though not strictly necessary, our bike was fitted with a battery to aid light and sound.

Clip-ons and a top half frame mounted fairing do nothing for the amount of steering lock available – buggar all in this case. A bit of lever repositioning and bar adjustment helped some but on this style of machine it's just one of the things you have to put up with. With the territory comes the riding position which is laid forward. The single seat with bum stop leaves no room for movement and if you're short of arm you would be actually resting on the tank. The rearset rear brake and gear lever sit at just about the right angle for the rest of the riding position.

Firing up a machine like this could be a daunting prospect particularly if all your body weight is needed to fight the compression as there's not much leverage on the bars. Fortunately with full choke from cold a couple of prods gets the silencers barking. One notch down on the left side gear lever gets first and off you go. The clutch is unsubtle but providing you've got more than a few revs on you shouldn't stall the motor. After this the clutch is best left alone for up changing.

The TSS motor pulls strongly and smoothly from about 2000rpm and so far this one seems unaffected by any of the porous cylinder head or loose valve seat problems. Evidence of the work



Winter is on it's way.

It's time to pull out the MZ/tatty old dirt-bike/Cossack outfit* from under the debris in the garage, take the Bonnie/Duke/Yamaha/other MZ* to pieces to find out whether the rattling sound/excessive oil consumption/mid-range flat-spot/dodgy handling* that started annoying you at the back end of July is natural, time to fit that Halogen headlight conversion that you bought at the end of last winter, time to dig out the thermals and the full face helmet, and time to work out why there never seems to be enough hours in the day now that the days are getting shorter.

And somewhere in all that lot you've still got to find the time to get hold of your copy of *Silver Machine*, which'll mean putting all your winter woollies back on again – having just taken them off – getting back on the bike before it cools down, and venturing forth into the cold night air in search of a paper shop that is still open.

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And for those people who thought I was asking why we bother riding bikes at all, there is no easy answer to that one except: why not? To steal an expression often used by Harley Riders – if I had to explain, you wouldn't understand.

* *Delete as applicable*

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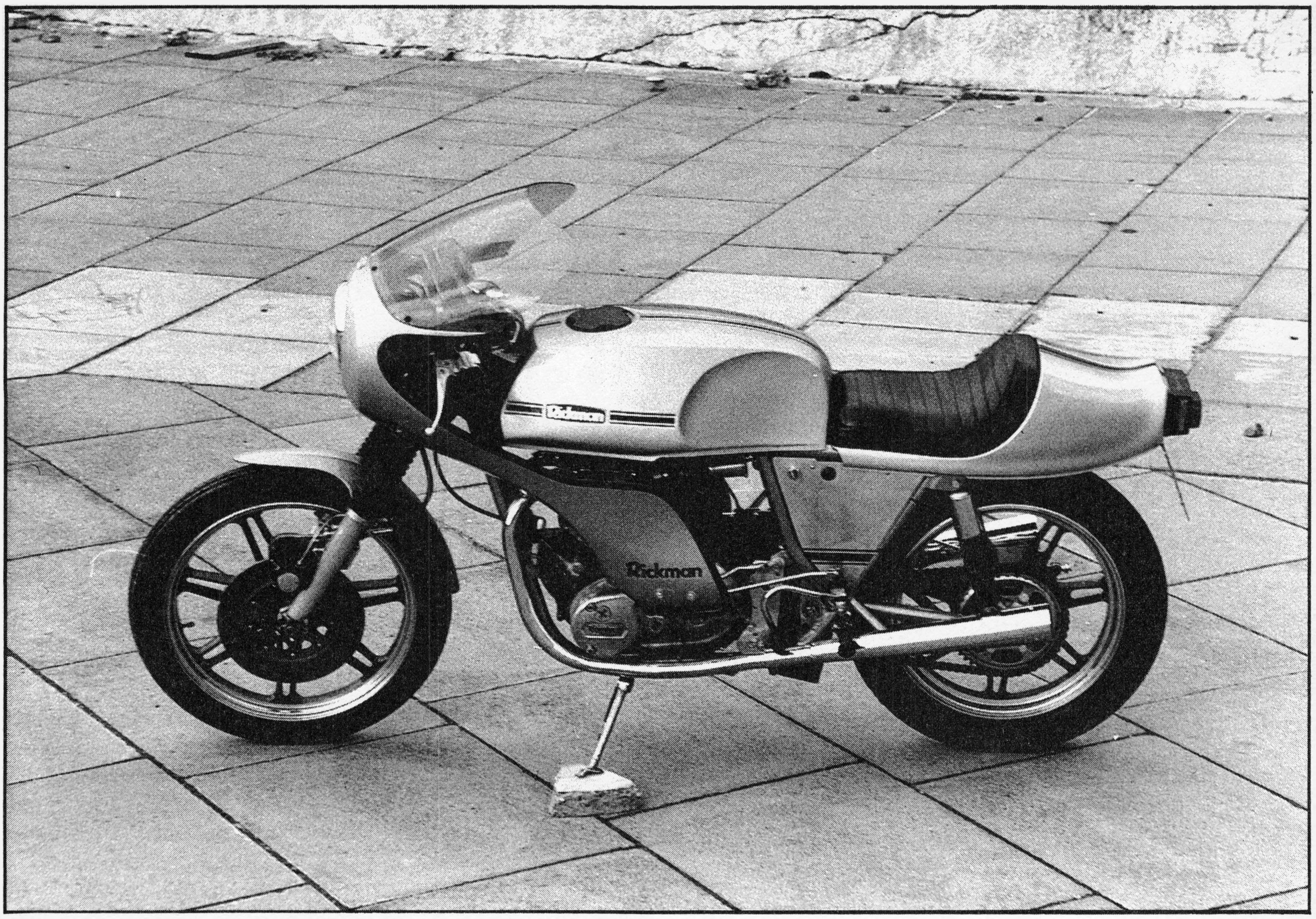
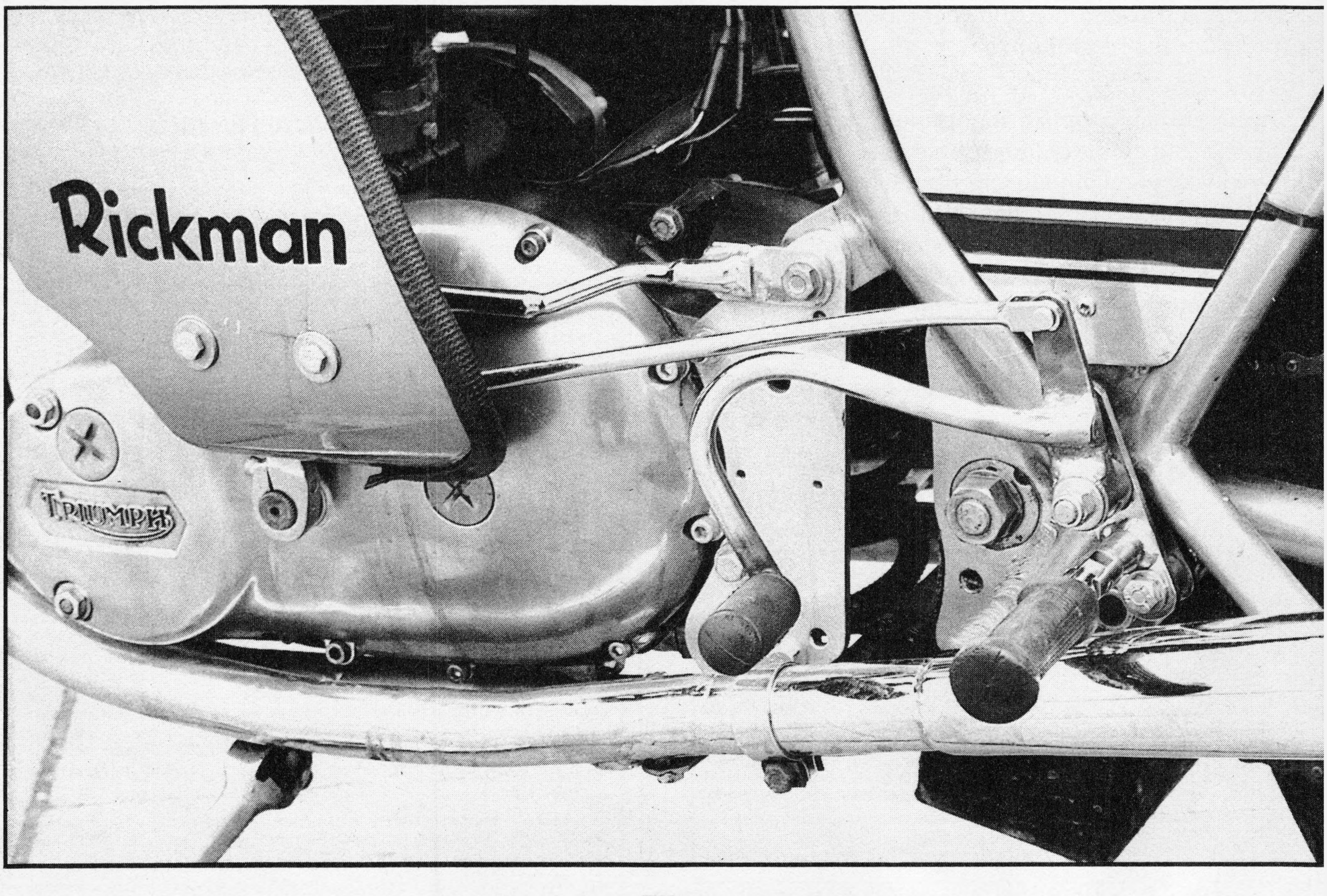
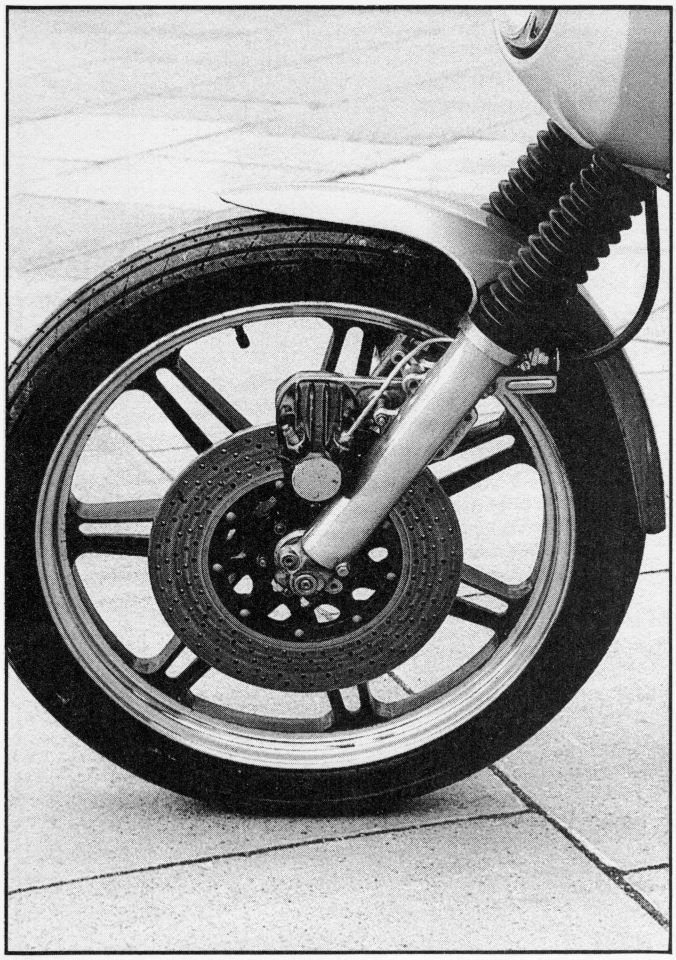
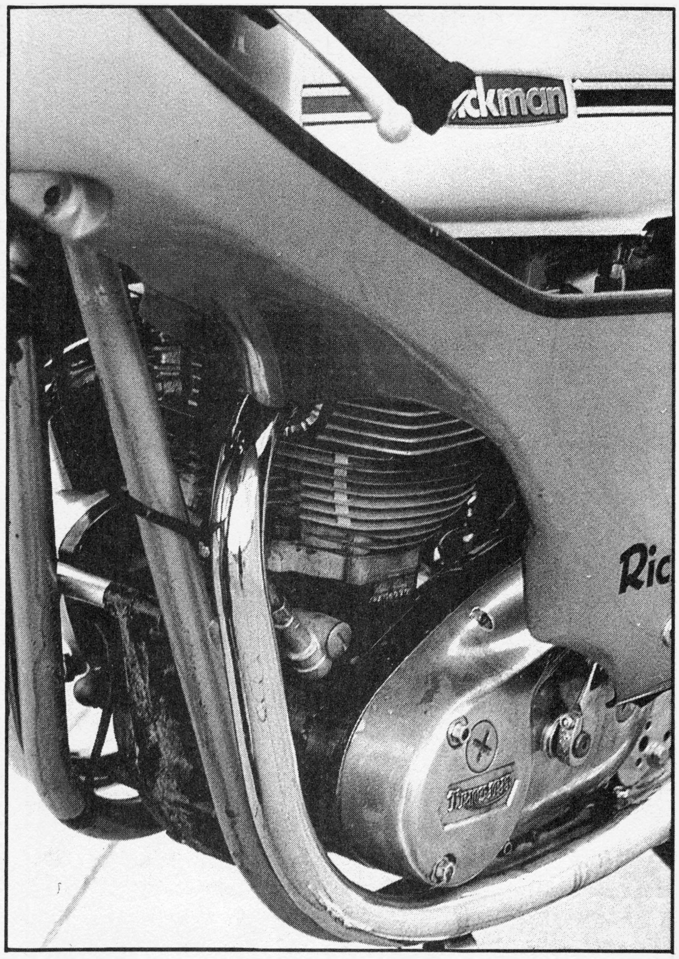


done on the motor starts to make itself felt at about 3500rpm at which point it starts to pull really hard. Beyond this it travels faster than any Triumph engined bike I can recall. Straight line stability is faultless probably due to the weight distribution which stops any lightness on the front end. Conversely at low speeds the front feels heavy but this machine isn't built to go slowly is it? Winding it on through the gears feels great and sounds amazing, the small diameter megaphone silencers don't actually do much silencing.

The dated Honda front end was



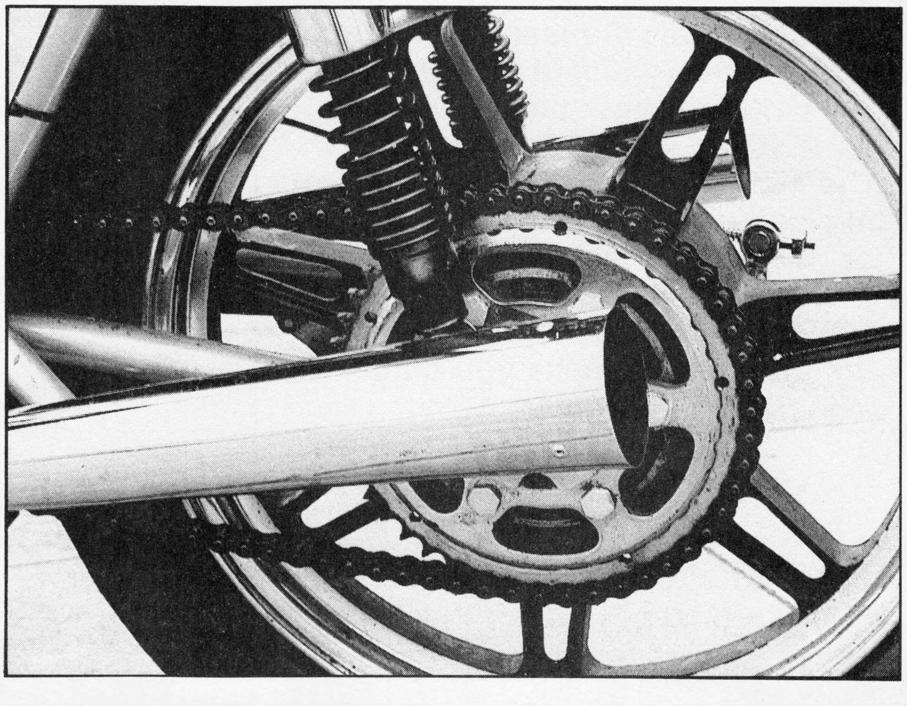




expected to be the weak link but in fact didn't hinder things much. The single disc could only be described as just adequate. We had to do some fiddling to get the rear brake working because the total amount of movement offered wasn't enough before the lever hit the exhaust pipe. Also, the fact that the brake isn't fully floating meant that you could be braking but if the swing arm moved up over a bump the lever came up against the pipe and let the brake off. Nothing that a bit of lever stop bending couldn't cure however. Once these niggles had been sorted, some serious road burning could be indulged in. Most bikes can go fast in a straight line but it's how they go round bends that sorts 'em out. The Rickman didn't disappoint in this area. The full sized front wheel doesn't produce quick steering so some body lean is required. If anything, the Rickman had some under steer, wanting to run wide out of corners. Late braking wasn't such a good idea either as the change in attitude of the bike when the brakes were let off made it harder to pitch it into the turn. But using engine braking helped minimise this problem. On a long bend, the bike would stick to any line you wanted and the power could be turned on early for the exit. Fast changes in direction like S bends were loadsa fun needing active rider input, that is, playing racers by climbing all over the bike.

Due to a somwhat intermittant speedo drive it wasn't always possible to tell what speed you were doing but mostly it felt fast enough to stay with more modern machines. On the few occasions I did get to ride with others on Jap tackle they confirmed this which added to the fun. The bike remained oil tight whilst we had it but it did sometimes get hot and bothered which upset the mid-range carburation but nothing too serious.

Apart from anything else the Rickman turned out to be a great pose. People who knew what it ws would come up and chat, those who didn't would walk round it til they saw 'Triumph' on the primary case and leave their curiosity satisfied. The age of the original cycle parts is uncertain but given that it is S reg it must be at least ten years old. The frame showed no signs of being any less perfect than the day it was made and the plastic had only marginal wear. Some cracking round the screen bolts had occurred but you can find that on a year old Kawasaki, basically the quality still shines through and really does qualify the Rickman to be the Best of British.



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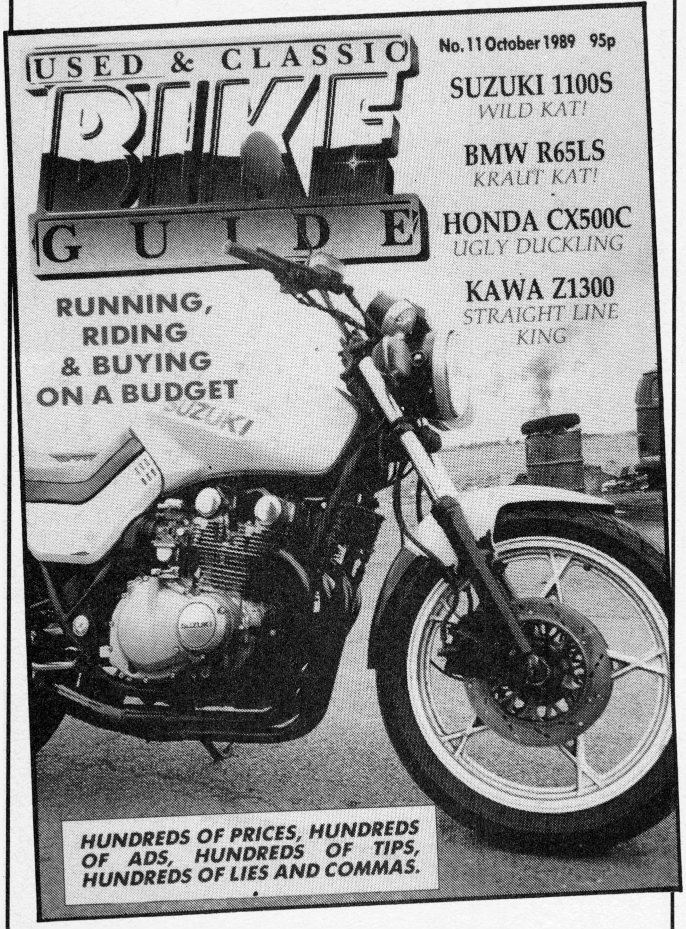

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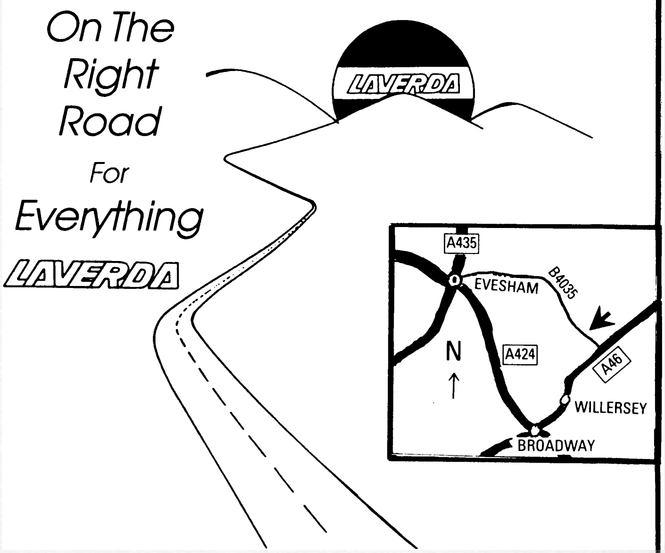

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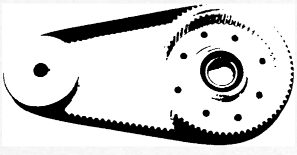

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Rockers' Reunion

Mike Clay goes to Portsmouth to report on positively the last Rockers Reunion run . . . for the time being anyway.

(Photos: Tony Sleep)

Sunday 9th September, the date of positively the last (again) Rockers Reunion run, did not get off to an auspicious start for me. I was woken at ten to five by the sound of rain pouring through my bedroom ceiling. If I had had any sense I would have taken that as an omen and crawled back into bed after placing a strategic bucket under the leak. But, ever the optimist, I hauled the Ducati out of its nice warm garage, collected Claire and Tim and headed off through a gentle drizzle to our rendezvous point for the Eastbourne contingent. After waiting a quarter of an hour, Alan Burgess, on his pretty little VT250 was the only one to have braved the damp, and as it turned out he was another who might have been well-advised to turn over and go back to sleep!

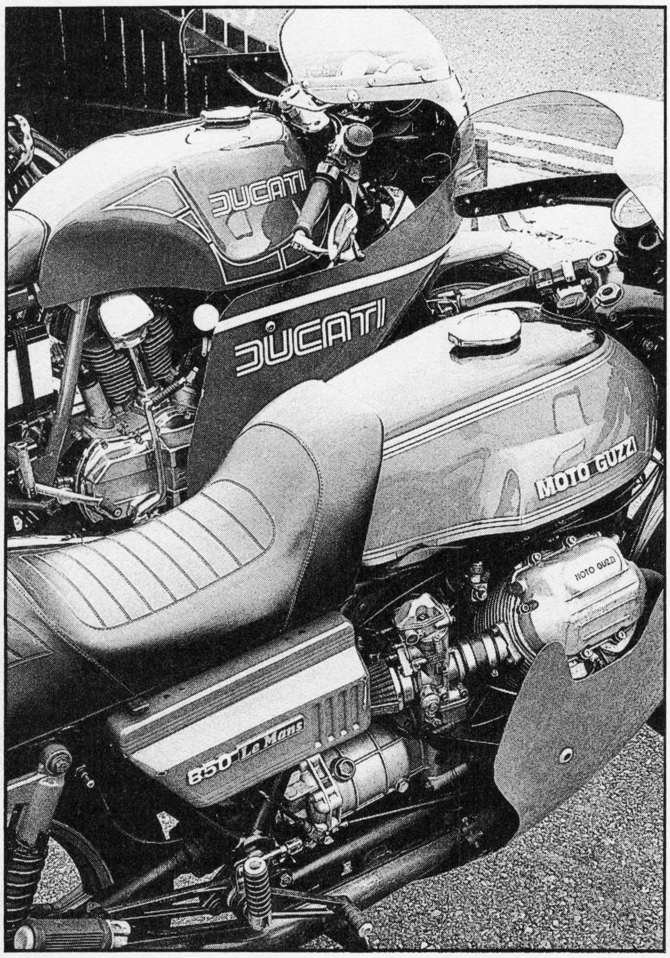
The ride up to London was not too bad though. Alan set a comfortable pace and once past East Grinstead we found ourselves on increasingly dry roads.

We arrived at Chelsea bridge about 8.30 to find a mere twenty or so bikes there. This time the gendarmerie had cordoned off part of the approach road to the bridge and put Battersea park out of bounds for parking (though not for having a discreet leak in the undergrowth I was relieved pardon the pun to find).

After an hour or so some more of our clan, Colin Pain on a GPz750, his brother Alan on an innocuous-looking all white RG500 that boasted a stage 3 tune-up courtesy of Stan Stephens, and a few of their friends joined us. It was about then that the police opened up the park for parking as numbers present had risen to a fairly respectable level (though way down on the giddy heights reached on the last Brighton run).

The exit from London was relatively painless and once out of town on the A3 we made some good steady progress, only interrupted to avoid a very worried-looking Triumph rider who was broadside on in the middle lane, at the end of a long, curving black line of rubber.

TRIUMPH
BONNEVILLE 750

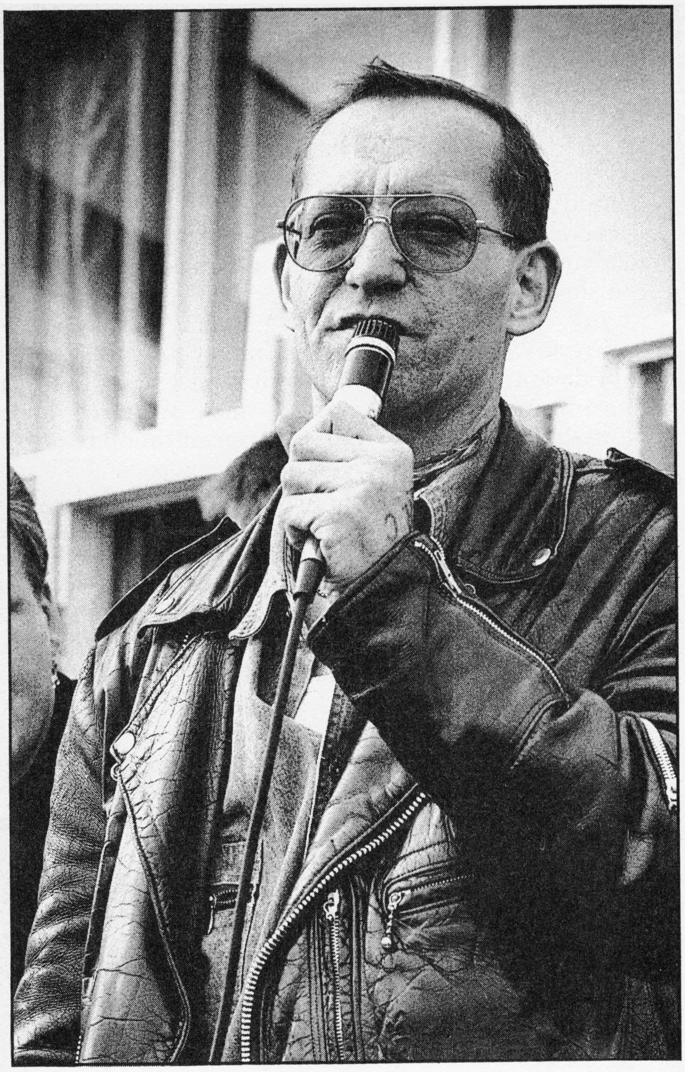


It was not long after this incident that Alan's VT250 stopped. It felt near to seizure he reckoned and was emitting an ominous rattle. After the Duke it sounded fine to me, but there again there's not much that doesn't! We continued cautiously, keeping our speed below 60mph and happily the problem did not develop any further.

We broke our journey at the Hillcrest cafe at Hindhead, literally on the brim of the beautiful Devil's Punchbowl. The cafe's position on the opposite side of the road caused some aggravation getting in and out but nothing worse. Browsing round the car park revealed some fascinating machines, including a Jawa twin with the most incredible cut-and-shut exhaust that I have ever seen. I found it hard to believe that it ran at all, but obviously it did, and not merely that, but well enough to make the run. There were also a couple of Japanese singles that had been stripped to the bare bones and turned into very purposeful-looking little B-road blasters – just my sort of bike.

Another machine that really caught the eye, and possibly the most interesting bike present, was an unbelievably ratty Norton which cradled an elderly Knucklehead Harley-Davidson engine. This, with the substitution of G80 Matchless heads and barrels, is a concoction that has tempted me for some years now. I guess what I am really hankering after is a kind of street-legal Lucifer's Hammer replica. I must admit though that I would like to find out more about this bike and its owner for my new book on specials.

After the stop we continued on our leisurely way with almost everybody hurtling past us, which was a little frustrating as the Duke really was designed to

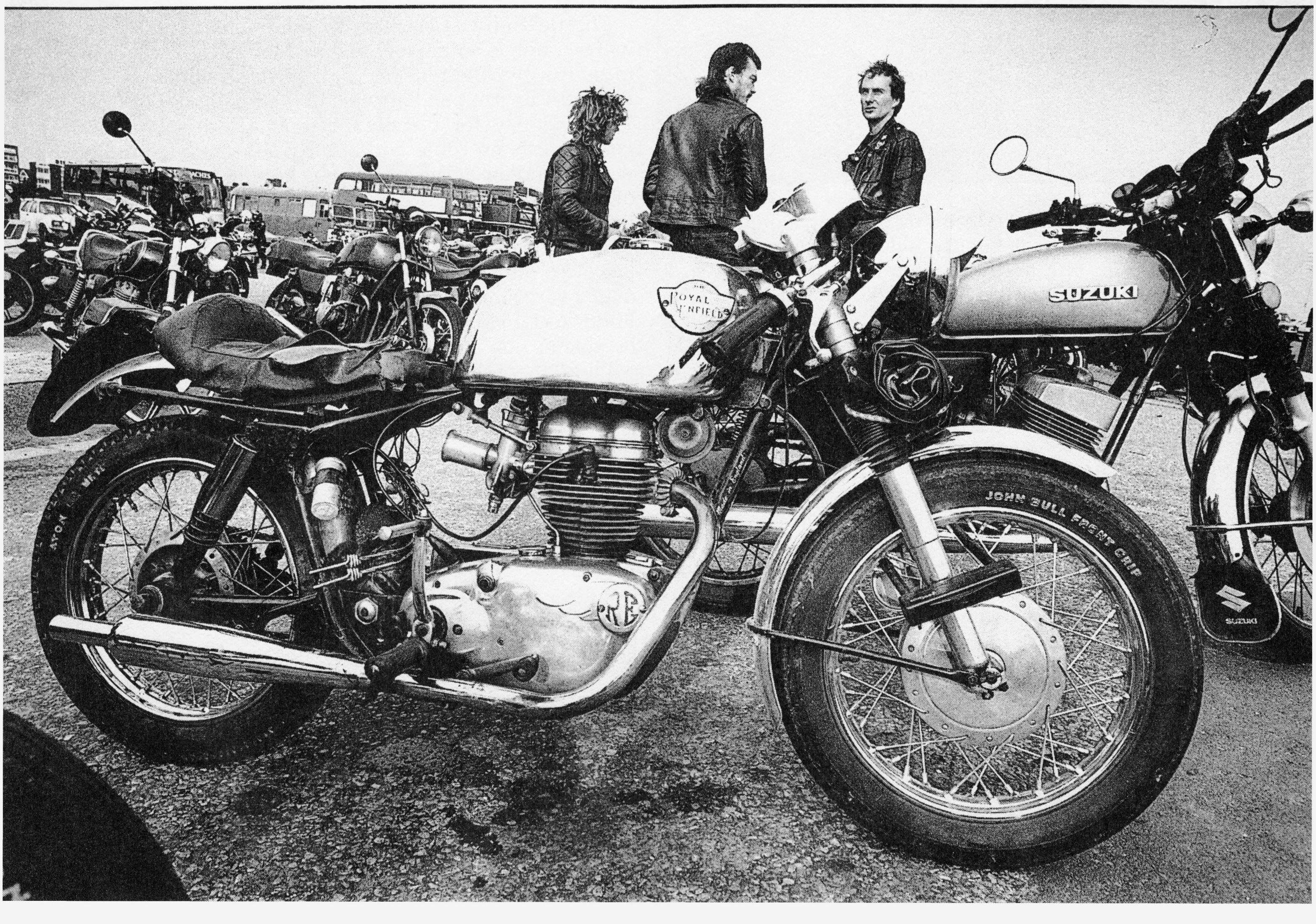


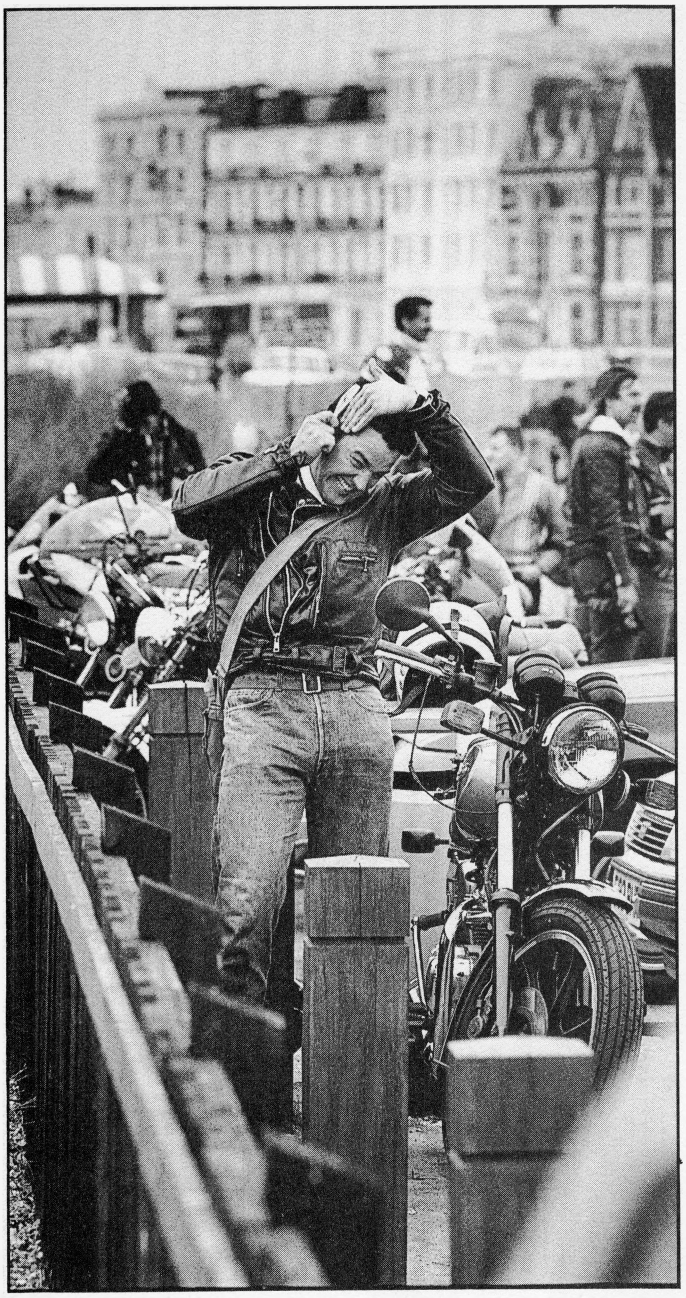
have its wotsits caned off at every opportunity. Fortunately though the engine and steering characteristics make it just as happy to waffle along like a big, soft tourer as it is to howl through the gears on the red line and, indeed, since developing its taste for slinging oil out of several different places this year it has been advisable to keep speeds down in the attempt to curb oil consumption.

The motorway carried us almost right into Pompey, just spitting us out in time to pass by a kind of graveyard of naval shipping where amongst the rotting hulks I was fascinated to see a couple of submarines quietly rusting away. Rolling into the Portsmouth suburbs we parked up and regrouped for our police escort to the final destination, which turned out to be Southsea rather than Portsmouth itself. Once finaly parked – virtually on the seafront – everyone wandered off to sample the joys of the seaside; even us lot from Eastbourne took an interest in the tacky souvenir and junk food establishments that lined the edge of the beach. We all took on our quota of greasy chips and joined the throng on Southsea pier where Len Paterson had hired the dance hall. Music was provided by the Zephyrs with Tony Vincent from CSA guesting on vocals.

The appearance of Father Bill Shergold who joined Doug Organ of the Children's Cancer Fund to receive the collection was exactly the right touch to bring to an end this first age of Rocker revival. After a disappointing collection from the four thousand plus on the Brighton run this year it was good to raise fourteen hundred pounds from as many bikes. Together with the money from other sources this enabled Len to hand over some £2600.

Our ride home started off well enough with Alan Burgess continuing to set a cautious pace. Alan Pain





showed remarkable restraint by burbling along behind for the best part of twenty miles before being overwhelmed by the urge to take a handful of throttle. I don't know what speed he passed us at but I felt like a moped on a motorway. Bless him though he stopped a few miles further on to let us catch up. The Duke continued to behave itself until it got near the centre of Brighton when it cried enough, cutting out on one cylinder and losing the other a few hundred yards further on. Investigation suggested that the plugs had given up the ghost and Colin and his brother nobly sallied forth to find replacements. Of course Ducati have to complicate matters by using short reach plugs and it took them a while to track down a set of four Champions meant for Heaven knows what obscure car. However they fitted, the engine started instantly and ran as sweetly as ever – for about three miles! A change to the two remaining new plugs set the show on the road again, this time for a further couple of miles. A change back to the first of the new plugs and a good thrashing (in the hope that this might keep the plugs clean) produced little more than another mile. This time I threw in the towel and my plug spanner stayed in my pocket.

Alan Burgess, who like me began riding in the Sixties, had kitted himself out accordingly and packed enough tools to strip and rebuild a small airliner. He had also packed a towrope. The Pain brothers having departed by now, Claire had the next biggest bike and bravely agreed to give me a tow. Tim hopped on behind Alan and away we went.

I soon realised that if you want to test out someone's machine control and anticipation then putting them on the sharp end of a towrope is probably as good a way as any. Suffice to say that in the twenty-odd miles we covered, which included three major junctions and a roundabout, the rope only went slack enough to jerk five or six times, and most of those were my fault. Nonetheless the strain from the concentration required to hang on the end of an eight foot towrope at 35mph was quite shattering and I was very, very glad to get home again.

This run had been much vaunted as absolutely the last Rockers Reunion run and it is true to say that it was the last run in the old familar format. However, if any keen types should turn up at the usual sort of time at Chelsea bridge on 6th May next year they will find a group of friends including Len Paterson, and probably yours truly, taking a little trundle down to good old Brighton. Anybody who wants to come along will be welcome and it is possible that we may travel on from Brighton to Eastbourne if a mate of Len's who runs a pub there manages to organise a band.

Those of you who enjoyed the 6th annual 'Piss Up' earlier this year will be interested to hear that the date (27th January 1990) for the next one, at Battersea town hall, has been taken over by one Pete Bruce, a rock'n'roll dance organiser of some experience. So even though the Rocker name may not be in evidence, the spirit will be and a right good time should be had by all.

The next official Rockers Reunion event (yes there will be one!) is tentatively planned for 1994. It will be a mass run to Brighton, on vaguely similar lines to the Pioneer Run with an entry fee in the region of £10-£15. This will pay for the organisation of special (albeit gentle) tests en route and a fairly substantial shindig with a band etc at the end. Len is hoping to get the use of Madeira Drive, where all the major London-to-Brighton events finish up. In addition those taking part will be required to guarantee sponsorship of some £50 or so minimum, with the ultimate aim of handing over a very substantial cheque to the Childrens Cancer Fund. As Len puts it: 'It's for those kids who will never be able to ride a motorbike or pull a bird.'

I'll be there, how about you?

MOTORCYCLE BREAKDOWN
MOTORCYCLE R
RECOVERY

Despatches

Silver Machine, PO Box 666, Altrincham, Cheshire

Silver machine

Help!

I am writing to you in the hope that you will print my letter in your magazine, partly to help me in my quest and partly to show just how far our mutual madness can take us.

My problem is thus – I have this insane desire to ride to Italy next summer on my as yet nowhere-near completed Clubmans DBD34. The madnes sis that I KNOW it's not a very comfortable long-distance tourer (never mind, think of those lovely windy Alpine roads as you cross over the Col du Grand Saint Bernard!). I KNOW that if it breaks down I'll probably be up Sh*t Creek without a proverbial (it's all right, I'll take out the AA 5 Star!). I KNOW it might get stolen if I actually RIDE IT ON THE ROAD (don't worry, it's not for shows anyway, and I'll be well insured), and besides, it might rain on the way back.

Is there anyone out there who can help me? Does anyone understand what I'm going through? Any suggestions, helpful or otherwise, will be gratefully lapped up or ignored. Surely I can't be the FIRST!

RICHARD CHEETHAM

London E17

Mugger

I am writing to ask you if you do an advertising mug or cup. I have started to read Silver Machine because of my love of bikes. I still find it hard to believe that Brit bikes are so expensive to buy; I would dearly love to own one. Silver Machine is the best mag I have seen for a long time. Anyway back to my original request. My other hobby is collecting mugs especially advertising ones, please let me know if you have any.

A J

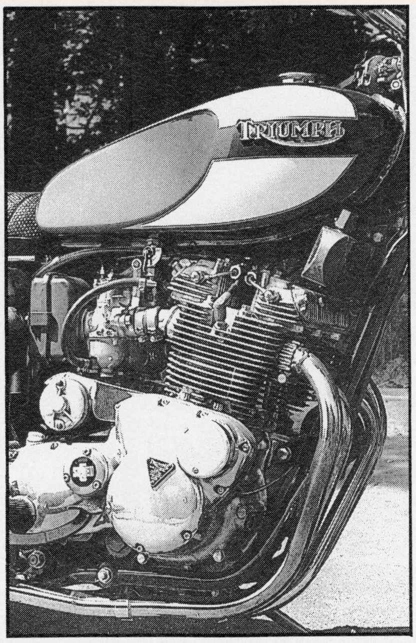
Manchester

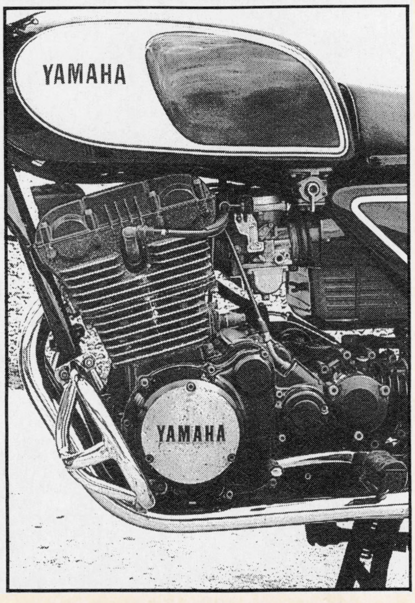
(No mugs here – RK)

Balderdash

Your comparison of the Triumph Trident and Yamaha XS750 was pretty fair, except for a few points. The paragraph that spreads from page 13 to 14 and the following two are utter balderdash.

For a start, the triple is *not* 'basically . . . a 500 twin with an extra cylinder'. This is a myth repeated by people, usually journalists, talking through orifices other than their mouths until it has become accepted as fact. I actually own both a Trident and a Daytona and I can assure anyone that wants to know that the engines owe virtually nothing to each other. They may *look* the same, but that is a marketing device, currently being used by Honda for their VFR750F and NS125R, and no one seriously suggests a VFR engine is four NS engines (do they)?





Secondly, the 'management malaise' that delayed the triples had nothing to do with Norton Villiers Triumph. The Trident and Rocket 3 appeared in 1968, and they did appear before the CB750; NVT didn't even exist until 1973! No, simply it had to do with the fact that most of BSA-Triumph's decision makers of the mid-sixties couldn't tell their arses from a hole in the ground.

Thirdly, you seem rather confused about the Quadrant. It was built only to prove a concept – that of an across the frame four cylinder motorcycle. Because of the triple's engine construction some triple components were used in the Quadrant engine. Because of this, later it proved easiest to use Rocket 3 cycle parts. If you actually go to the National Motorcycle Museum and examine the Quadrant you will see that it could not possibly have been sold to the public in the existing form.

Next, 'the . . . Trident motor had the same internal dimensions as the 500'. Rot. As you go on to state correctly, the triple's are 67×70mm but Triumph never marketed a 500 with these dimensions. You said at the beginning of the article that it was something you've always wanted to do – it's a shame that some of the time wasn't spent doing a little research. I appreciate that you cannot know everything about motorcycling history, but such basic cock-ups hardly engender confidence in your writings. May I suggest Bert Hopwood's 'Whatever Happened to the British Motorcycling Industry' should be required reading?

Finally, to switch to the XS750, I notice you make no mention of the model's well recorded penchant for blowing up right angle gearboxes. In the early 80s it was said that no breaker anywhere could supply a secondhand right angle gearbox.

STUART MacAULEY

Harrow, Middx

Gratuitous Fan Mail

Nice to see a mag out somewhere between the dried classic bike mags and the boozy, sexist type. Anyway, I'm looking for the address of the Triumph Owners Club. I've bought just about every bike mag on the shelf and they have just about every owners club apart from the Triumph Owners club, the one I want. Much obliged if you could help me out.

EMMA KAYE

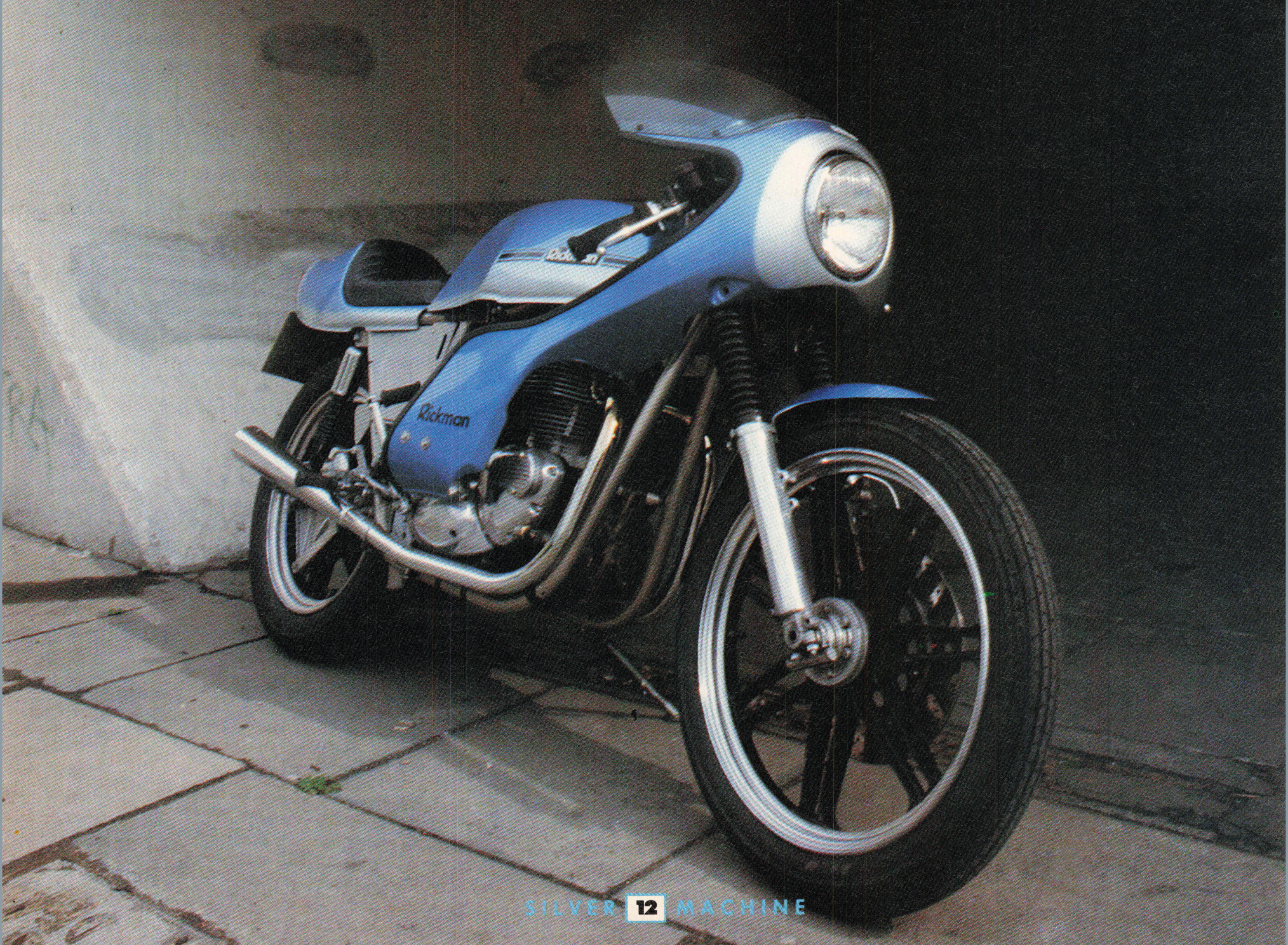
South Brent, Devon

(The address you want is the Triumph Owners Motorcycle Club, 4 Douglas Avenue, Harold Wood, Romford, Essex, there you go.)

ace test

8-Valve Rickman Triumph

Rick Kemp gets to grips with the Triton's Successor


Rickman
Rickman

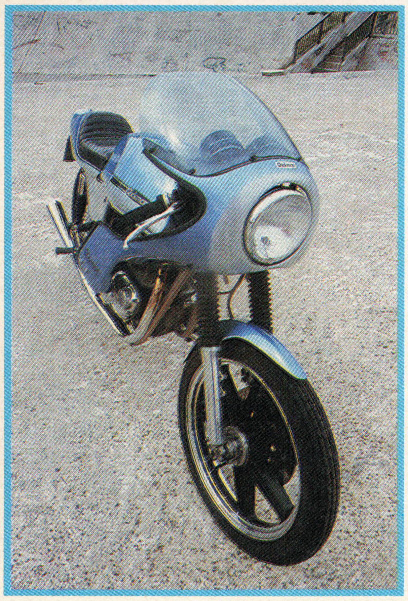
The Rickman brothers, Derek and Don have done many things for motorcycling over the years. Apart from being pretty useful riders in their own right they established a company to manufacture and supply the motorcycle industry with specialist items. This was done at a time when most retired successful competition riders opened shops at best, wrote books or disappeared into obscurity. The company has remained successful throughout a long period of fluctuating motorcycle sales including the complete demise of the domestic industry.

Adapt, adopt and improve they have certainly done but apart from this, they have been innovative which has been part of the key to their survival. Well known for their glass fibre ware for British machines, they soon adapted to the Japanese machines supplying fairings, panniers and top boxes for just about everything going. But perhaps their biggest coup in this field was to get the manufacturing contract for Honda-style which gave Rickman an almost official stamp as far as Honda owners were concerned. This also provided the money to carry on developing new lines which the smaller manufacturers couldn't do (remember all those people who made single skin versions of BMW's RS fairing and tried to adapt them to fit every Jap bike?).

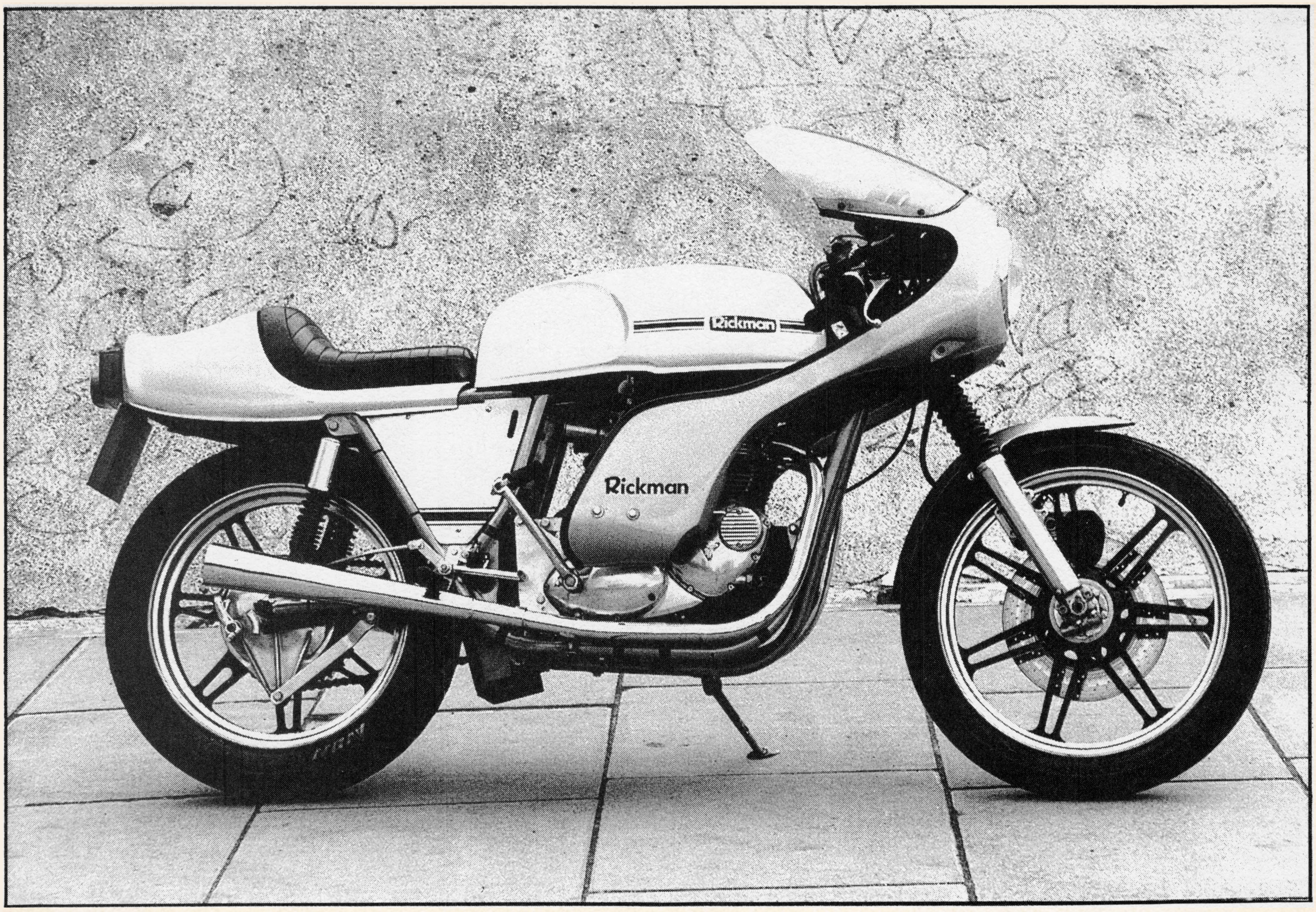
But alongside and prior to, all this software, they also produced the hard stuff, the stuff that's made from Reynolds tubing and nickel-plated frames. This stemmed from the brothers' involvement in first trials then motocross. Their participation in the latter led them to the conclusion that motocross machines of the day could be improved upon, imagine riding the BSA A10 at 60mph over rough ground and you'll have some idea of what they were up against. Basically what they did was to build a Tribsa with Norton forks. The pre-unit Tiger 100 motor was used with a BSA box, wheels and hubs also came from BSA. The name Metisse was given to their creation being French for mongrel bitch, it sort of sounds better in French doesn't it?

The step from assembling other peoples components to making their own was forced on them by the rest of the industry who withdrew their supply as soon as they realised that their own sales were being affected by the Rickmans' product. The fact that Don had come third in the World Championship on one of his own bikes without competing in all the rounds, only rubbed salt into the wound. Rickman offered their frames to any British manufacturer who was interested. With their usual blinkered vision, none were. So Rickman had to go it alone and expanded into road racing. A collaboration with Dave Degans led to the Dresda Rickman, a variation on the Dresda Triton for which he had become well known.

This was probably the first the average biker in the street had heard of Rickman. Soon there were street kits available and I for one remember thinking at the time that crashing my Triton wouldn't be such a bad thing because maybe I could get a Rickman chassis on



Rickman
Rickman



the insurance. There was no way I could've afforded one otherwise. As with most specials, Triumph power provided the motive force for most of the Rickman chassis running around the streets: though there was a batch of Rickman Interceptors built using the Royal Enfield 750 MkIII engine. These bikes had a less attractive tank/seat unit than the bike tested here but had the distinction of being fitted with a disc brake at either end – a big deal in 1970. If anyone's got one of these machines, we'd be keen to feature it. Most of the Interceptors were punted out by Elite Motors of Tooting, London.

Triumph powered Rickman's had some further development at the end of the '60s, with the company offering Weslake developed heads for sale. Our test machine is perhaps the most modern example of that same theme. It was recently built by Terry Hobbs down in Plymouth after he'd bought it with a seized 650 lump from a soldier based in Germany. Out came the 650 engine and in went a 750, eight-valve, five speed TSS motor. But not before it had been worked on a little. The cylinder head was flowed and polished, the cams were changed and secret mumbo jumbo performed with the electronic ignition and valve timing. The TSS's barrels have Nickasil bores made in Italy and was in most respects Meriden's most modern motor. Before installing the motor some cosmetics were carried out. Head and barrels bead blasted but with black rocker boxes and pushrod tubes. Crank and gearbox cases are also finished in black with all outer covers highly polished.

The Rickman frame is still a work of art. A simple duplex cradle with a triangulated rear sub frame made from Reynolds 53I, bronze welded and nickel plated. The tubular swingarm is eccentrically mounted at the pivot for chain adjustment. This is the only area which is below par by modern standards. The rest of the frame could handle twice the power but the relatively lightweight swingarm would flex. Rickman did produce their own fork but in most cases if bought as a frame kit other forks would be fitted, in this case the slightly odd choice of early Honda items including single sprung caliper disc and the instruments. Cast alloy wheels from Cambray are fitted and the rear drum brake plate is another Honda part, but in polished alloy it looks right.

Oil-in-frame concepts aren't new by any means but the Rickman version contains a certain amount of lateral thought. Just fill the frame with oil, why not? No specially large diameter top tubes or front down tubes here! The down tubes have a balance pipe across and breathers are fitted to the top rails. One of the cross brace tubes under the seat is threaded for a filler cap and the return oil hose. The feed side comes off another cross tube, this time under the engine. Oil level can be checked through a view tube mounted on the rear frame rail. One advantage of this system must be cooling and another is the lack of an oil tank, all the electrical components can be mounted under the seat out of the way. Though not strictly necessary, our bike was fitted with a battery to aid light and sound.

Clip-ons and a top half frame mounted fairing do nothing for the amount of steering lock available – buggar all in this case. A bit of lever repositioning and bar adjustment helped some but on this style of machine it's just one of the things you have to put up with. With the territory comes the riding position which is laid forward. The single seat with bum stop leaves no room for movement and if you're short of arm you would be actually resting on the tank. The rearset rear brake and gear lever sit at just about the right angle for the rest of the riding position.

Firing up a machine like this could be a daunting prospect particularly if all your body weight is needed to fight the compression as there's not much leverage on the bars. Fortunately with full choke from cold a couple of prods gets the silencers barking. One notch down on the left side gear lever gets first and off you go. The clutch is unsubtle but providing you've got more than a few revs on you shouldn't stall the motor. After this the clutch is best left alone for up changing.

The TSS motor pulls strongly and smoothly from about 2000rpm and so far this one seems unaffected by any of the porous cylinder head or loose valve seat problems. Evidence of the work

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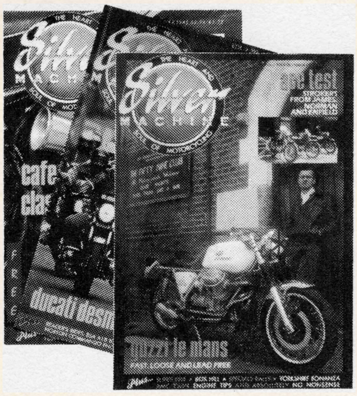

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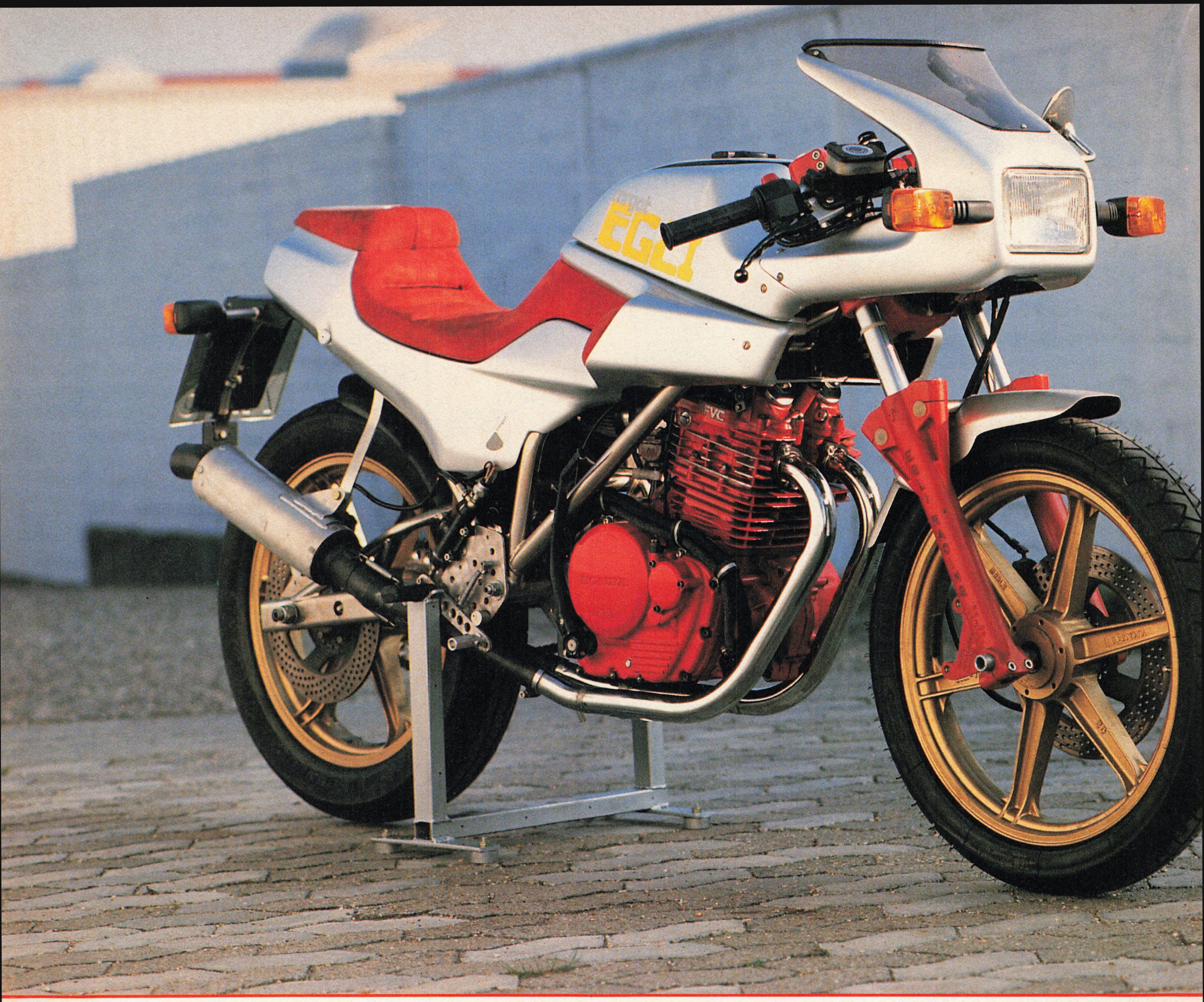
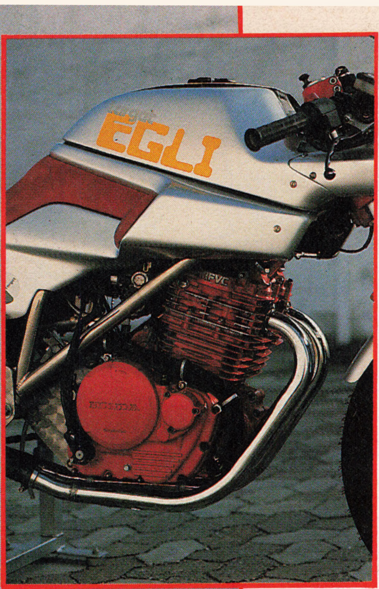


The pendulum of fashion is on a reverse swing right now, as bike enthusiasts all over the world from Tokyo to London, Sydney to LA are rediscovering the charms of what the French so aptly call the 'gromono' – The Big Single. Consciously or otherwise, they're fuelling a reaction against the ever more complicated, ever more expensive multi-cylinder offerings from Japan – and Germany and Italy too. With spiralling insurance costs, ever more restrictive speed limits and increasing bureaucratic pressure on performance providing the backcloth. Rational people are rediscovering tradtional motorcycle values aboard a new generation of four-stroke singles which in every way emulate the period appeal of the British singles of 20 years ago. The spirit of the goldie lives again!

Ironically, the fuel for this revival is coming from Japan, not only thanks to the Japanese manufacturer's development of big single motors to power their Paris-Dakar contenders and their neo-enduro street offspring, nor even Honda and Yamaha's various efforts to cash in on the single-cylinder street revival with the SR/SRX and FT/CBR/GB ranges. But as the sound of swinging singles swells to a roar on the Japanese home market, the traditional skills of European engine and chassis manufacturers are increasingly being called on. Gilera were commissioned to produce the Saturno Bialbero by C Itoh (and sources continue to insist that Norton have a similar project under development); Ikuzawa and Harris have collaborated on a range of high-tech Anglo-Japanese singles; now word comes from Italy that Roberto Gallina is working on a single-cylinder roadster using the DR Big Suzuki motor, at the behest of a Japanese customer. Others however have gone it alone and Gunther Knuppertz' Egli-Honda is just such a bike.

A German technical wizard in his mid-40s who designs performance camshafts for the flourishing German car tuning industry – well, with no speed limits on the autobahns, you'd expect it to be flourishing, wouldn't you? – Knuppertz is first and foremost a bike freak, with a collection of exotic Italian classic racers on which he's carved out a



Mono Mania

Alan Cathcart has a go on the modern answer to the big single in a trick frame, the 700cc Egli Honda

(Photo credit: Phil Masters)

reputation as one of Germany's leading historic bike aces, and an RC30 Honda for weekend 150mph-plus cross-country blasts. but lately the RC30s began gathering cobwebs in a corner of his spacious workshop, as his attention concentrates on an altogether different kind of Honda, the Egli-framed single-cylinder cafe racer. 'I admire the engineering skills that produced the RC30, and especially its technical specification, which is fantastic for a road bike,' says Gunther, 'but even though Germany is practically the only country in the world where you can use a bike like this to its full potential on the street, I still don't think it's a very good road bike. Motorcycles like this belong on the race track, whereas for normal everyday use, a machine like the Egli is much safer, at least as satisfying, more economical and not nearly so frightening! It makes more sense.'

Sensible is hardly the adjective we'd have used 20 years ago to describe a 700cc four-valve cafe racer which pulls wheelies in second gear and has a top speed of more than 130mph, but everything's relative and by the standards of an RC30 – well, yes, I suppose it is! It's certainly more rational and every bit as much fun, as well as less uncomfortable to ride for any distance, as I discovered when Gunther let me loose on the bike for a day. Already a convert to the single-cylinder cause (though I have to admit a twin is, well, if not twice as good, at least that much better still!), I'd have to say after my spell on his maxi-single that Gunther has a point: less can be better, after all. Knuppertz bought the bike in 1986, though in fact it's the actual machine displayed on the Egli stand at the 1984 Cologne Show, when Fritz launched his range of single-cylinder street rockets fitted with bodywork styled by the Anglo-German freelance design studio, Target Design, who as you may recall were also responsible for one of the most individually-styled Japanese bikes ever brought to the market place, the Suzuki Katana. The Kat's ancestry is evident in every facet of the Egli's Target bodywork, leading one to wonder if perhaps it wasn't a design for a Suzuki Katana single that never got made. No matter – the trademark styling only helps the Egli to Target its customer even more narrowly, aimed squarely as it is at someone who wants a thoroughly modern single with '80s rather than '60s styline and the performance that goes with it.

For a series of rather turgid commercial reasons, not many Egli singles have been built so far, and one reason Gunther's bike sat around for eighteen months after the '84 Cologne Show with zero kms on the clock is reputedly because of a disagreement over marketing policy, characterised by the puny FT500 engine fitted to the bike when he acquired it, thus providing more show than go. Gunther decided to revamp the bike completely to reflect his own personal ideas of how a big single should be, and this is the result.

Retaining Egli's trademark chrome-moly tubular steel spine frame, whose large diameter backbone doubles as an oil tank for the dry-sumped engine, just as on the Reynolds frames of the late 50s from which the design is derived, Gunther junked the FT motor in favour of a radial four-valve XL600R trail bike engine which originally measured 97× 80mm, for a capacity of 591cc. Regard-

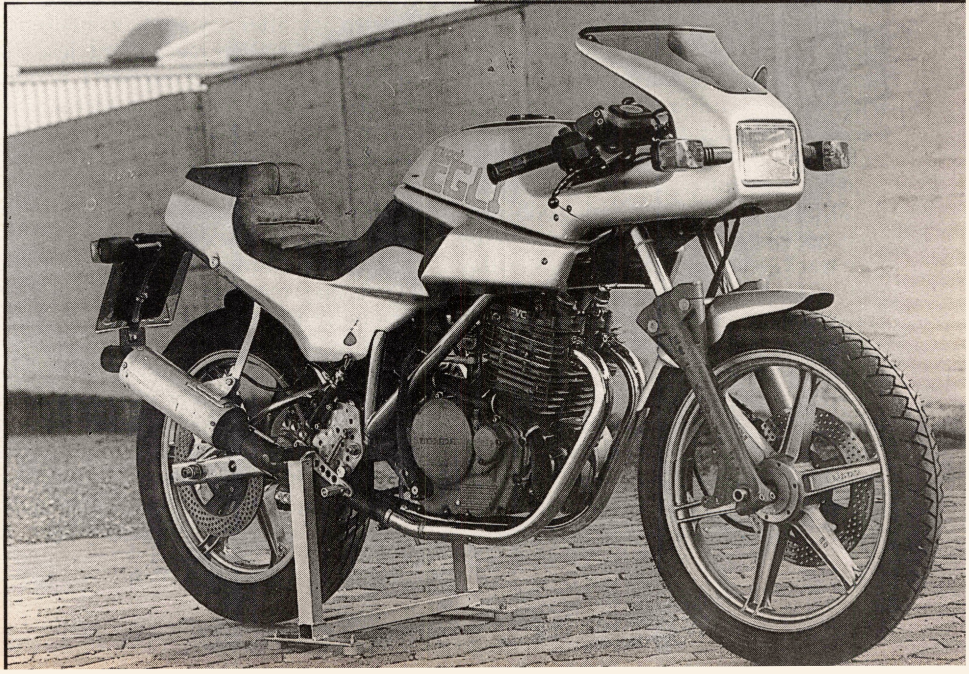
Mono Mania

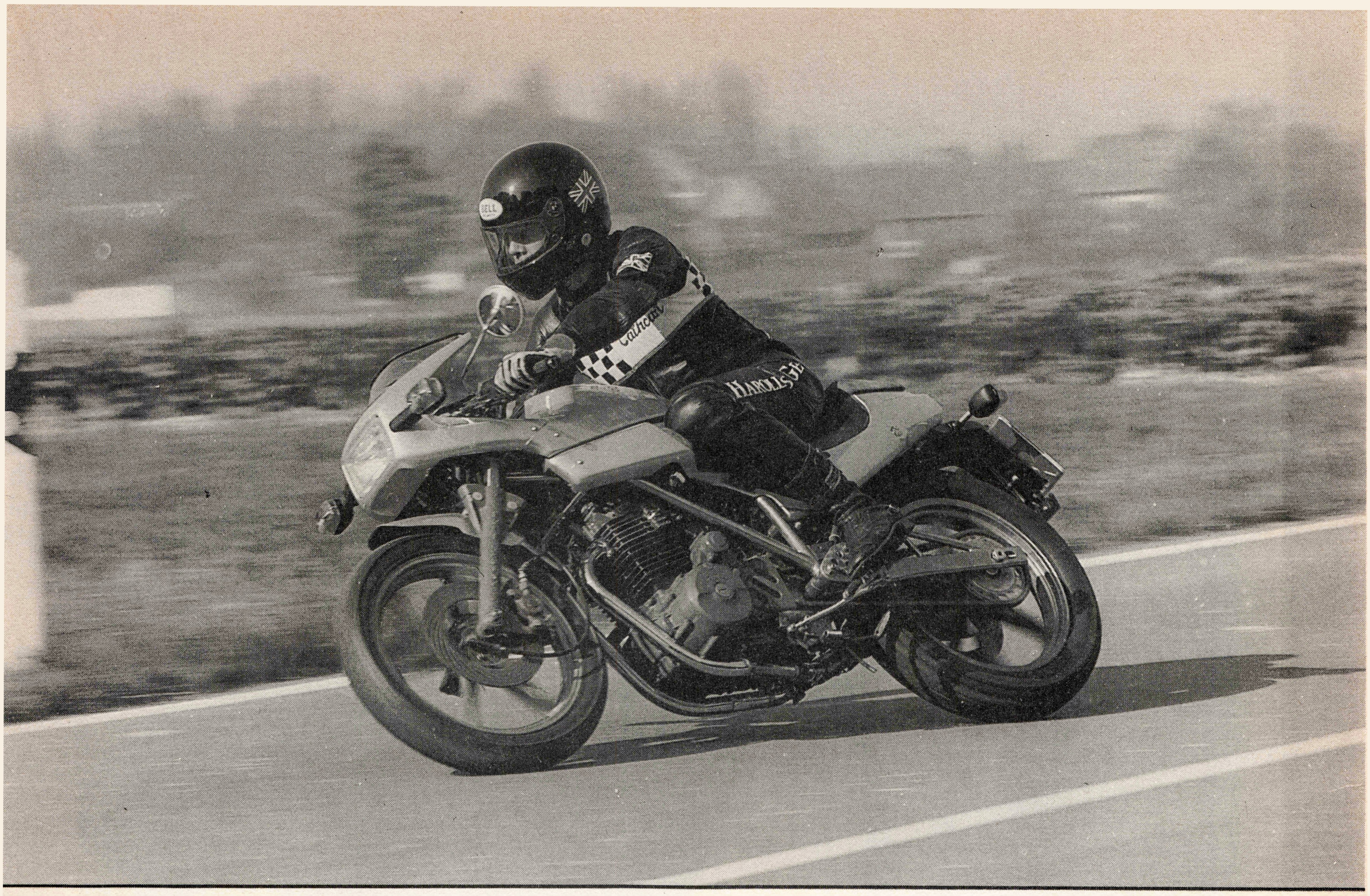
HAROLD'S GEAR

ing this as seriously lacking in the cubes department, he got his friend Bernd Staschl in Bremerhaven, creator of exotic hardware ranging from new cranks for four-cylinder 250cc GP Hondas to dry clutch conversions for Ducati singles and just about ever part needed to build your own BMW Rennsport from new, to build a new 88mm crank for the Honda single. To this he mated a 100mm Mahle semi-slipper piston running in a Nikasil chrome bore and giving 10:1 compression instead of the motor's original 8.8:1. Given his own expertise in the field, it was inevitable that Gunther would design his own camshaft for the revised engine, offering more lift and dwell, but not too radical as he wanted it to be usable round town. The standard XL600 valves were ratained, but the head flowed and the ports polished, though the original twin 28mm Keihin carbs with their differential throttle action were retained, and he also kept the exhaust fitted to the Egli when he got the bike, with twin Honda downpipes from the twin-port head joining to meet up with a single silencer on the right side.

The flat, light Mahle piston means the resulting 691cc engine can rev just as high as when it measured 100cc less, though in practice there's so much grunt low down that the 7,800rpm redline need scarcely be approached to ensure dramatic acceleration by any standards, especially for a single and even with the wide-ratio enduro-derived five-speed gearbox. Honestly, this would have to be the fastest-accelerating street single I've ever ridden, by some margin: there's so much horsepower available from little more than 1500rpm that it's impossible to keep the throttle cracked wide open in bottom gear, for the simple reason that you can't keep the front wheel on the ground! Short-shifting into second at about four grand is the hot tip, but even then – whoops, here it comes again . . . Since no steering damper is fitted, this can make life quite exciting, especially since the rather elderly Dunlop Endurance rear tyre gave a reasonable amount of grip and would allow the throttle to be whanged open with a certain degree of impunity exiting a turn. Hit a bump just as the front end starts to get light again, and you'll be wishing Mr Egli hadn't omitted this item from his shopping list when he built this show model. Of course, I just remembered – they don't have bumps on Swiss roads, do they . . .?

Though Gunther's retained the balance shaft in the XL-based motor (apparently the way to race-winning hp in the British singles race series is to

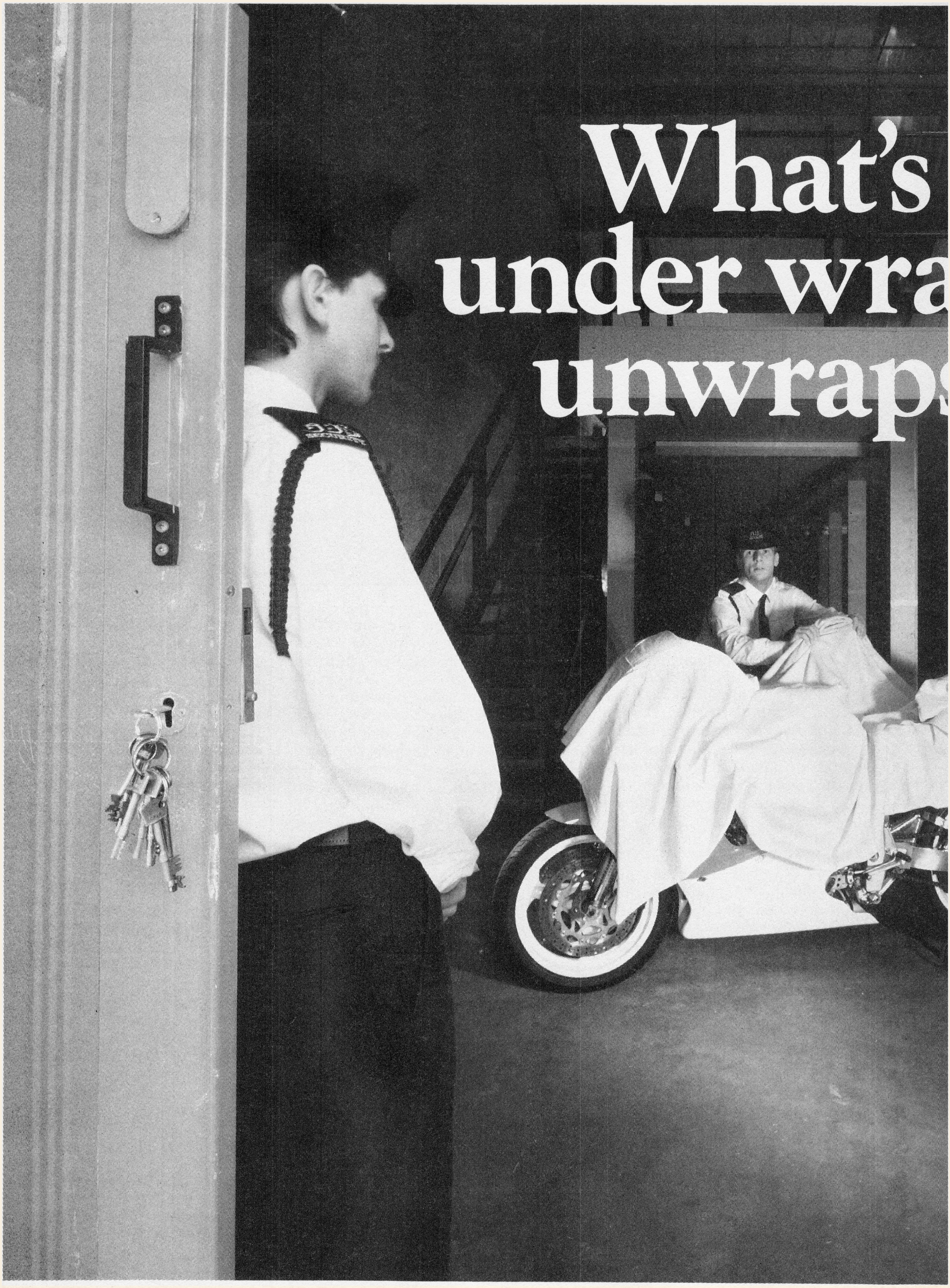




whip out the counterbalancer and revise the balance factor on the crank to suit), there's a fair bit of vibration from the tuned 700cc motor though it's not bad enough to be unpleasant and can be considered as a bit of period flavour dialled in rather than a lump of lead in the flywheels Staschl left out. Not having put the engine on a dyno (yet), Knuppertz can only guess at the horsepower, but reckons it's around 60hp at the wheel in street-legal form, and says that 65hp or so with a tuned motor should be feasible – 'maybe more, but then it's not so rideable.' Ah yes – that word: rideable the Egli-Honda certainly is, thanks to that amazing low and midrange grunt which makes your choice of gear almost irrelevant, your attention to revs practically immaterial. The engine will lug around corners at almost walking pace without stalling, yet propel you at remarkable velocity towards the next bend once yout get it more or less pointing straight and with the front wheel at least in closish contact with the ground – all the time accompanied by that mellifluous, slightly subdued but still emotive thump-thump-thump exhaust note. Happiness is a swinging, sprightly single . . .

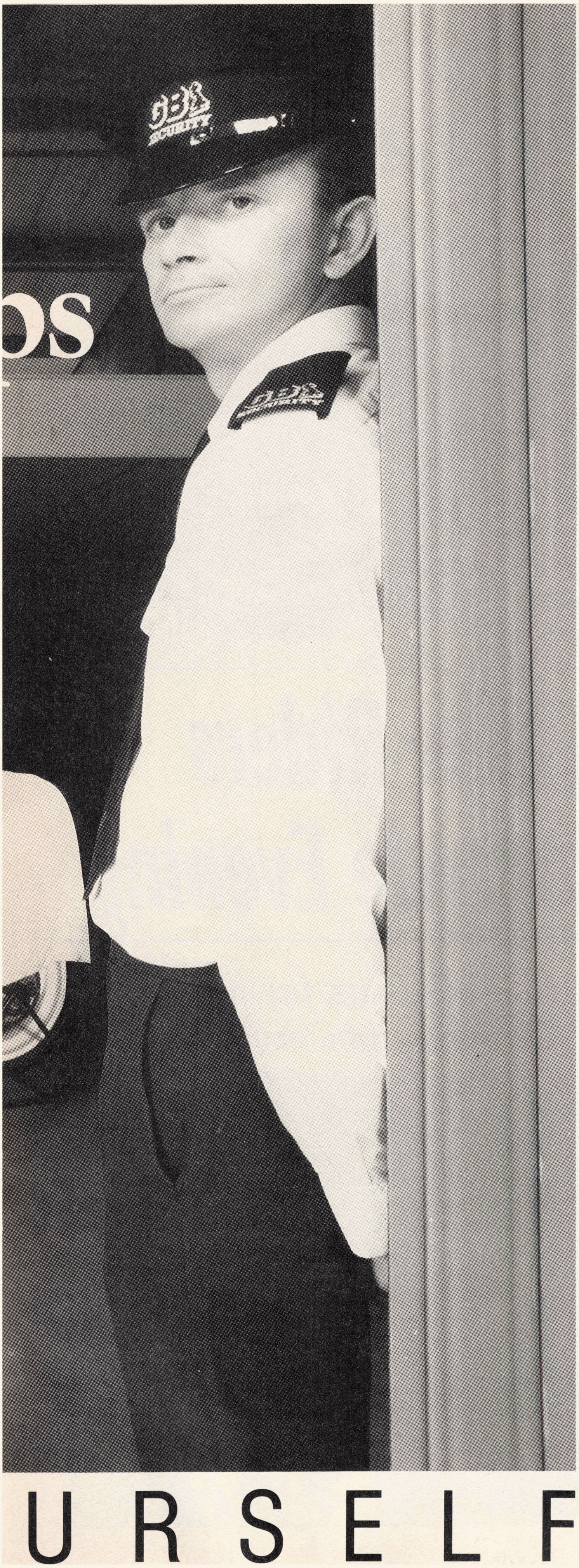
Having been built for the German market, where customers are invariably built on the Teutonic scale rather than the Latin variety, I found that the Egli offered comfortable accommodation for someone of my build, aided by the undoubtedly thoughtful ergonometrics of the Target bodywork. This enables sir to nestle his knees against the little pads on either side of the fuel tank when riding in upright mode, or when crouched, to rest his elbows on the flat bit in front of them. Neat – and comfy. Originally built around now-outmoded 16 inch wheels, the chassis was more low-slung than it is now that Gunther has converted it to 18 inch rims, still using Egli magalloy wheels made for the Swiss chassis builder by Mahle in Germany – a 2.15 inch front and 2.75 rear. I think 17-inchers might have been a better bet, not only because of the better range of rubber now available in this size, but because the steering is now if anything too light – especially without a steering damper. The Egli steers and handles like a 250 – but with the huge torque of the big single motor, a little more stability would be appreciated. The original and highly distinctive 35mm Egli forks are still fitted, made for him in Dietikon, Switzerland by a company who also make rifle bores for the Swiss army and with cast-in hangers for the Lockheed calipers Fritz favours, though I was glad to see only one front disc is fitted to the bike: too many people like to overbrake singles today and the Honda stopped just fine with the single disc . . . The sliders are over-engineered for a bike of this size and weight, though, and by current standards the forks lack progressivity of damping, though on mostly smooth German roads they work fine. Anyway, since the front wheel spends so much time in the air . . . OK, only joking! More disconcerting though, was the definite shimmy from the front end at speed, perhaps a function of the change in wheel sizes without altering the steering geometry, and maybe curable with fitting a damper. But it got bad enough to discourage me from clocking more than 170kph on the speedo, at which point the engine was thundering along relaxedly at 6200rpm. By that reckoning, Gunther's estimation of a top whack at the 7800rpm redline of just over 210kph/130mph should be spot-on. Some going for a four-stroke single!

With the Sound of Singles (SoS) race series catching on big time in Germany this year, there's a lot of interest again in street singles there, especially thanks to the recent steep hike in insurance rates and the clampdown on the horsepower race by the authorities which seems likely to intensify. Egli is reported to be dusting off his Target Design single and revamping it for the 1990s, in which case he could do a lot worse than point his customers in the direction of Gunther Knuppertz in search of motive power and performance from a user-friendly, air-cooled single. Meantime, Gunther has a problem: 'I built the bike for my daughter to ride,' he says, 'but she's been too busy working on her engineering degree to do more than a few kilometres on it, so I thought I'd take it out myself last month – and now I'm hooked! I like it more than the RC30 to ride. Only trouble is, she graduates this year: how do we decide who gets to ride the bike??' Sounds like a case for severe parental discipline, if you ask me . . .



What's under wra unwraps

SEE FOR YO



Suddenly, endless undercover work is out in the open – at Britain's only International Motor Cycle Show. New models, new colours, new styling, new ideas and a touch of the classic too. Look at it all . . .

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For young and old, fast and not so fast: super sports, commuter bikes, everything down to mopeds for all the family.

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See the glittering new mega-monsters. Ask about the new features. Catch up with the latest high performance design details.

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Nostalgia on show! Vintage and veteran bikes from the Golden Age. See these rare treasures of the past change hands – at the first ever International Motor Cycle Show Classic Auction on Sunday 5th November!

ACCESSORIES

The Motor Cycle News Supermarket is open again this year, with a massive choice of gear and accessories for sale.

And throughout the Show, motorcycling superstars will be calling in for personal appearances and autographs.

It's all happening at the NEC, Britain's most important exhibition centre. There's plenty of low-cost motor cycle parking. So don't miss out – you'll never forgive yourself!

Starts Wednesday 1st November – goes on till Monday 6th November. Opening times 10 am till 7 pm daily (last day 5 pm).

URSELF

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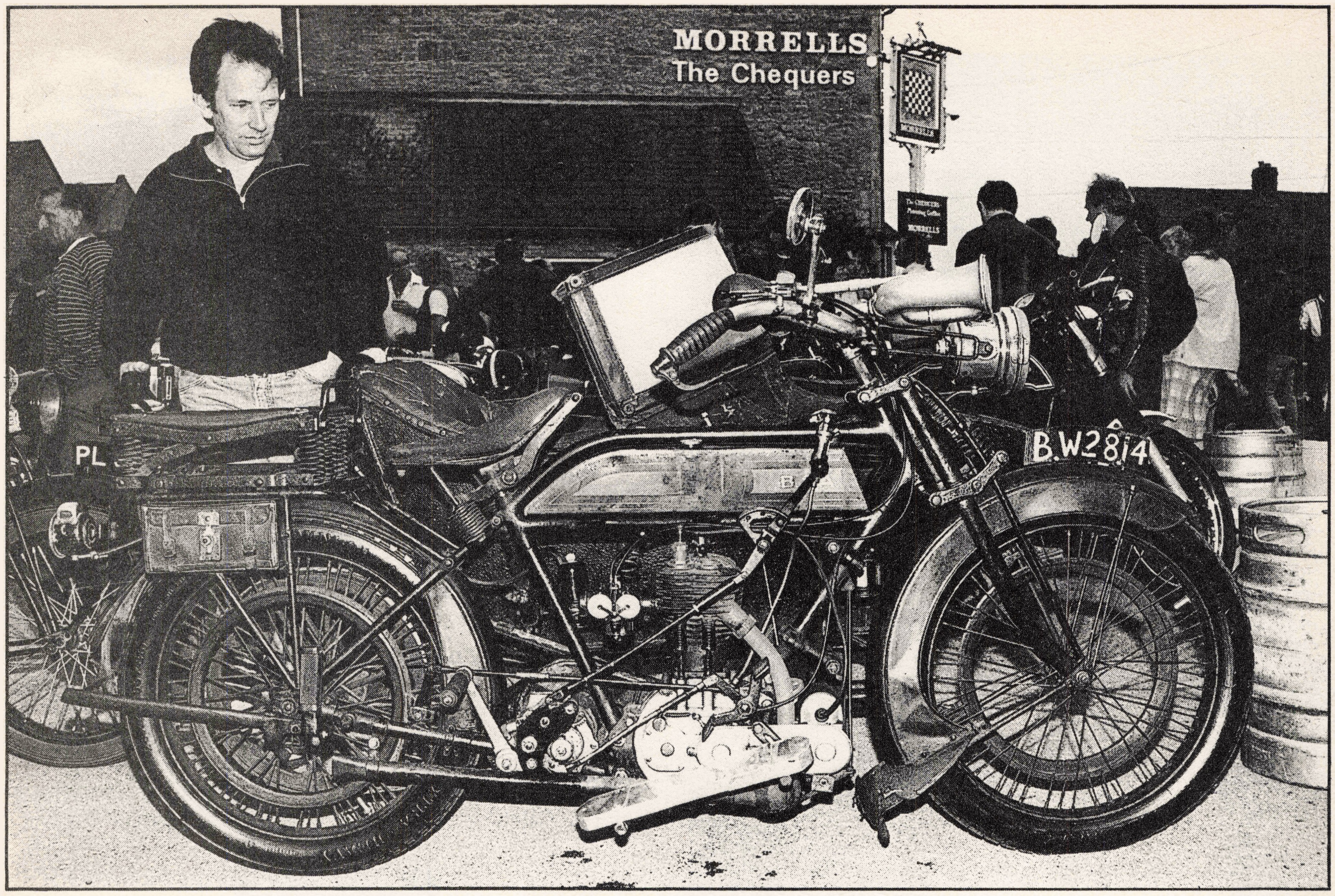
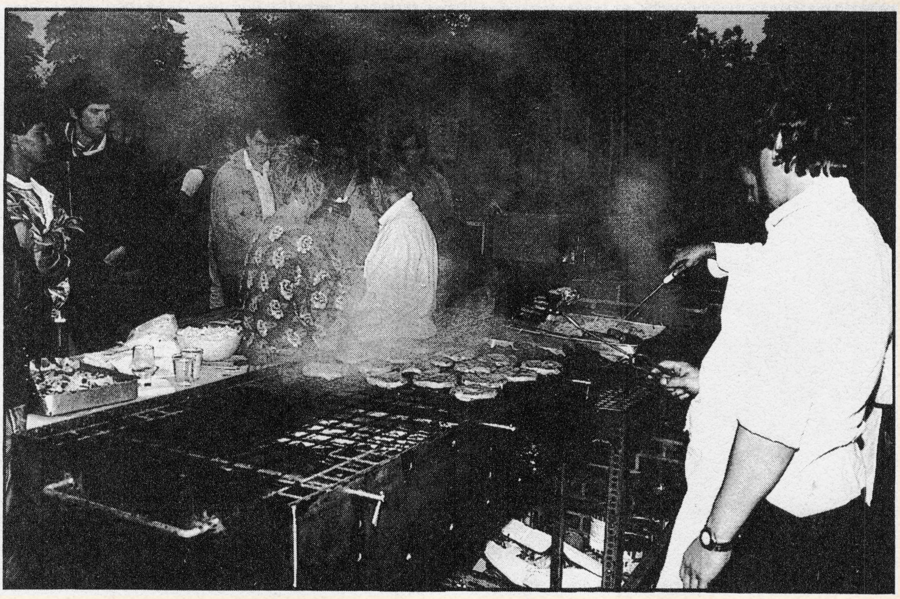


Oxford British Bike Riders Great British Motorcycle Evening

Warm evenings, cool beer, British bikes as far as the eye can see. What's all this then? Clive Humm investigates.



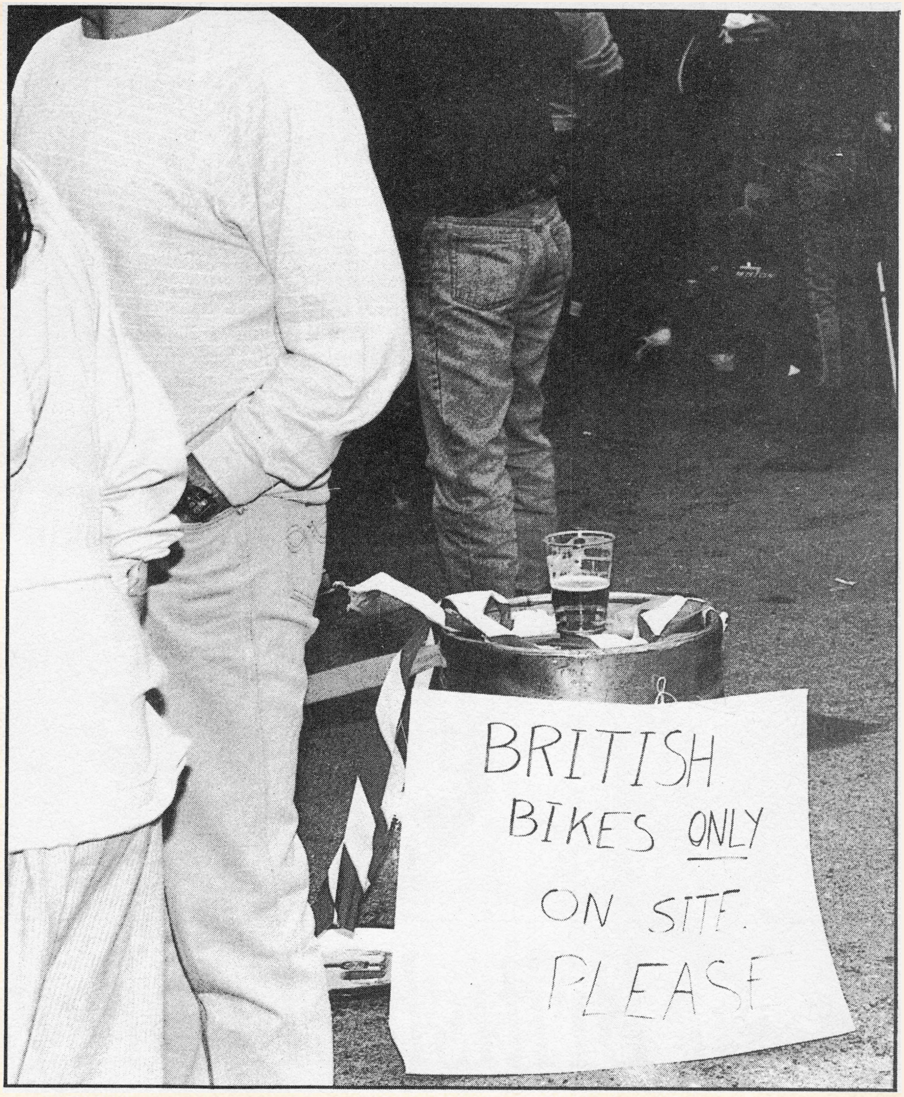
Imagine a sleepy little Oxfordshire village. You know the sort of place, one road in and one road out, six houses and a pub. Now, imagine that the pub has a large car park, an even larger garden and plenty of other parking areas besides. In your mind's eye, fill this car park, the garden and all the adjacent roadside verges with British Motorcycles – hundreds and hundreds of them and you begin to get an idea of the phenomenon that is the Oxford British Bike Riders' Club 'Bike Night' (nobody ever calls it 'The Great British Motorcycle Evening').

The best thing about this event is that it just happened. You certainly can't accuse the organisers of shooting their mouths off about it. There was no publicity in any of the specialist magazines. No, the only prior publicity was by word of mouth and very effective it was to be sure.

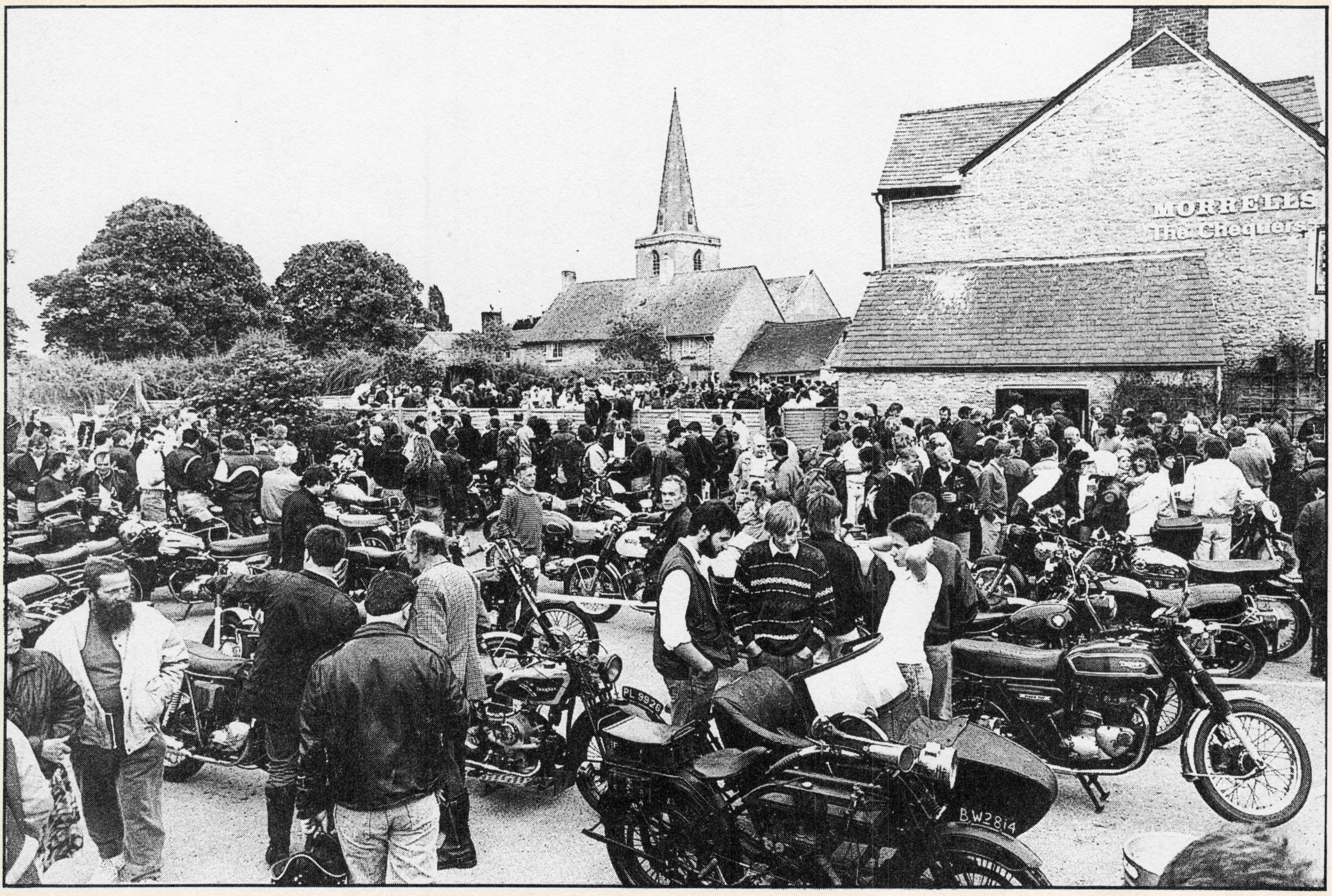
I arrived at 8.30 and was directed past the sign saying 'No foreign bikes beyond this point' to a spot about half way down the car park. Half an hour later I could not have left if I had wanted to as the car park was solid metal and all of it British – or nearly all of it. There was one foreigner, an elderly BMW. He must have arrived early, before the 'British Bikes Only' sign went up, because he parked right at the back of the car park. I understand that he was trifle upset when he wanted to leave early.

Of course, there were several hundred British bikers milling around saying things like 'I used to have one of those' adding to the confusion and chaos. For me, the confusion and chaos add to the charm of the Bike Night. I've been to similar events where bikes are neatly parked in rows, according to make or age or capacity of somesuch and whilst this is fine, it can lack atmosphere.

The Oxford Club's Bike Night has atmosphere by the bucketfull. Aged veterans with acetylene lights rub shoulders with halogen lit Bonnies. Greying men in tired Belstaffs natter with downy-checked lads in heavy-metal leathers. Chops park alongside Broughs and both receive admiration and covetous glances. In fact, if Moses had said that it was out of order to convert thy neighbours motorcycle, instead of his oxen, hell could have been several hundred souls the richer as a result of the Bike Night.



Great British Motorcycle Evening


MORRELLS
The Chequers
PL 9652
BW2814

ABOUT THE CLUB
The British Motorcycle Riders Club Oxford (BMRCO) caters for riders of British Motorcycles of all shapes sizes and ages.
We meet every Monday at the "Chequers" Cassington:
all welcome to visit!
RIDERS CLUB OXFORD

This was the eighth annual Bike Night in the Oxford Club's nine or ten years of existence. Apparently it all started because someone thought it would be a good idea to find out if there were any other enthusiasts in the area. So they put an advert in the local paper and waited to see if any bikes would turn up. They hoped to attract perhaps fifty bikes. Around three hundred bikes actually arrived, the pub ran out of beer and the Bike Night has been an annual event ever since. The club itself was formed to cater for people who used British Motorcycles as everyday transport. Over the years the accent has changed slightly – as values have increased and vital spares become more difficult to find, fewer motorcyclists want to risk their pride and joy in the rush hour. However, it is still very much a riders club and fiercely pro-British. Arrive on Jap multi and you will be ignored. Arrive with a highly polished British variety on a trailer and they will be unimpressed, but arrive on a rusty but running Bantam and you will find a very warm welcome.

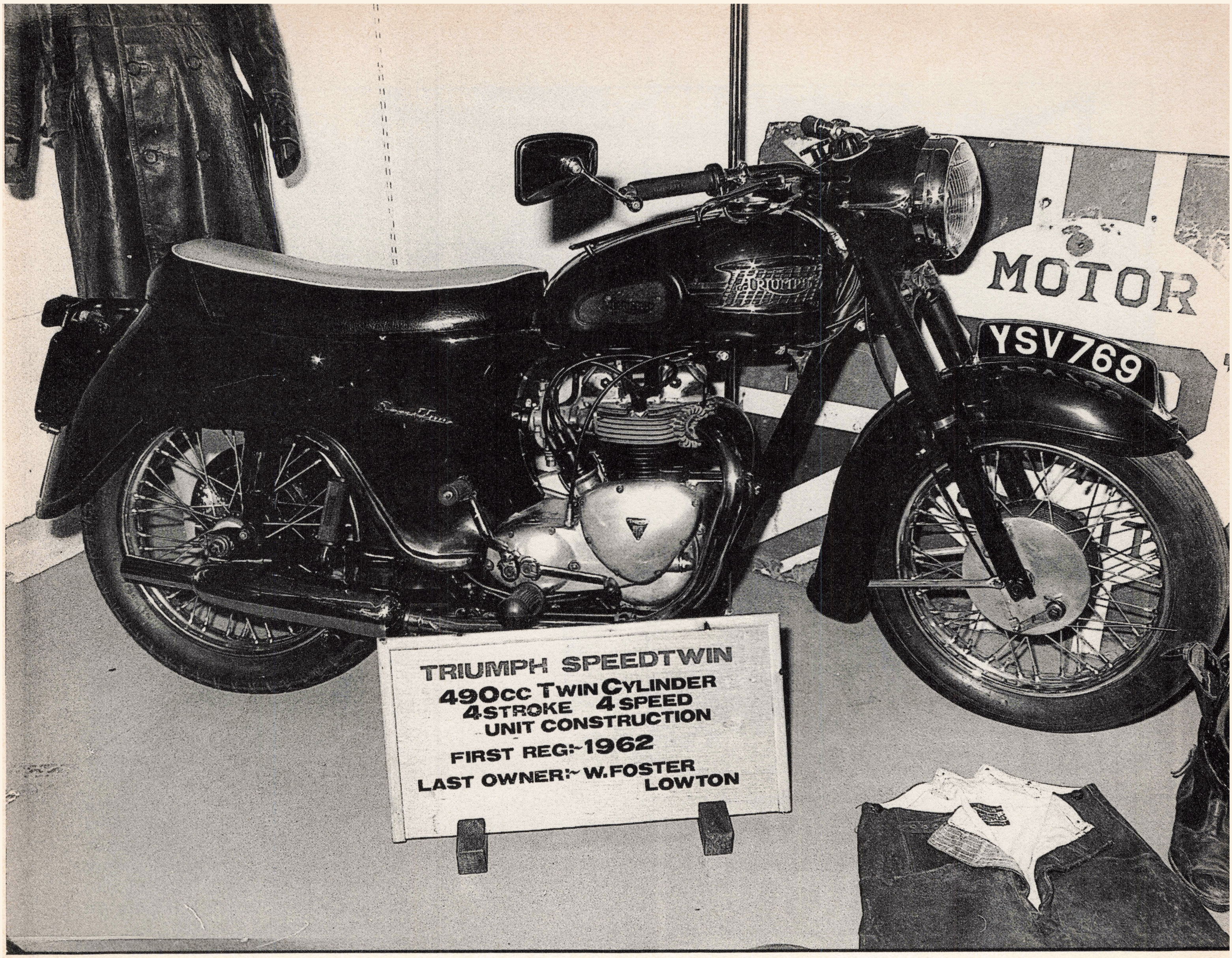
As they say, there are plenty of motorcycle clubs that Jap riders can join and there are plenty of owners' clubs too, but this is a British Riders' Club. Full membership of the club is open to anyone providing that they join on a British motorcycle, but they are not total fascists. They also cater for you if you have just acquired a heap of bits that will, one day, be a running restoration. You can join the club as a non-voting associate member. Associate membership is available for one year only because you can restore anything in a year – especially when you have the help of the other members of the Club. And, who knows, at the next Bike Night you could win a prize. The Oxford club hand out all manner or trophies which is pretty generous for them because they do not charge an entrance fee for the event, or if they do I've managed to avoid the man with the collecting tin three years running.

FOREIGN
BIKES
←

They dish out trophies for Best Two Stroke, Best Engineering – sponsored by Oxford Motorcycle Engineers (I've been told to give them a plug 'cos they have been brilliant in sponsoring this prize for the last few years and do lots of stunts for charity.' Thanks Oxford Motorcycle Engineers. End of plug), for Finest (shinyest) Motorcycle, pre- and post war and, the most coveted for 'Best Ridden' motorcycle. The 'Best Ridden' award is open to club members only and is voted for by the other club members as the bike which best represents the aims of this Riders' Club. So you will not win if you lay the bike up for winter.

You might expect a Riders' Club to poke gentle fun at the chrome and Solvol brigade. You will not be disappointed. The Finest Motorcycle trophies are known within the club as the 'conker cups'!

If the idea of joining a club that puts riding first appeals to you (would you believe a club run to Yugoslavia?) go along to the Chequers at Cassington any Monday night on your British bike of course. And if you want to be part of the 1990 Bike Night you had better make a note in your diary now – Monday June 25th – because I don't suppose they will bother to publicise the event next year either. It will just happen.



Made in Wales?

Julie Richards-Williams discovers that the new Welsh motor-cycling museum is a real winner.

A Warrington born husband and wife team have successfully set up the biggest privately owned, run and financed British motorcycle museum in Wales in the centre of the popular seaside resort of Llandudno.

The forty three bikes currently on display cover a fifty six year period from 1914–70. Unfortunately most British bikes are now out of production – apart from Norton and Triumph, which are made in limited numbers – so the museum offers enthusiasts the opportunity of seeing a fine collection of the best of British!

It's the realisation of a dream for Mike and Sue McGarry, who for years had wanted to start their own business connected with these machines. Open only since the beginning of March this year, the museum is certainly proving a real winner, not only drawing a steady stream of visitors but, as the word gets round, attracting an ever increasing number of bike fans. 'In the past few months that we have been open, we have had visitors in from Canada, Japan, France, Germany, South Africa as well as lots of people from all over the UK,' says Sue, an attractive blonde who shares her husband's passion for British bikes.

Both in their thirties, Mike and Sue had previously worked in catering for ten years, running their own hotel and restaurant. Mike, a qualified mechanic, had always been particularly keen on British bikes, so last year he and Sue decided to take the plunge and set up a museum. They sold their restaurant and holiday flats in the town and used all the proceeds to finance the venture. It has taken a great deal of hard work and determination on their part to set up this dream museum because when they first bought it, the building in a prime site at the top of Upper Mostyn Street was derelict and minus part of its roof.

Together with their son John, the couple worked all last winter at renovating the property and travelling the country purchasing bikes, clothing, enamel signs and copies of old motorcycling magazines from the 1930's.

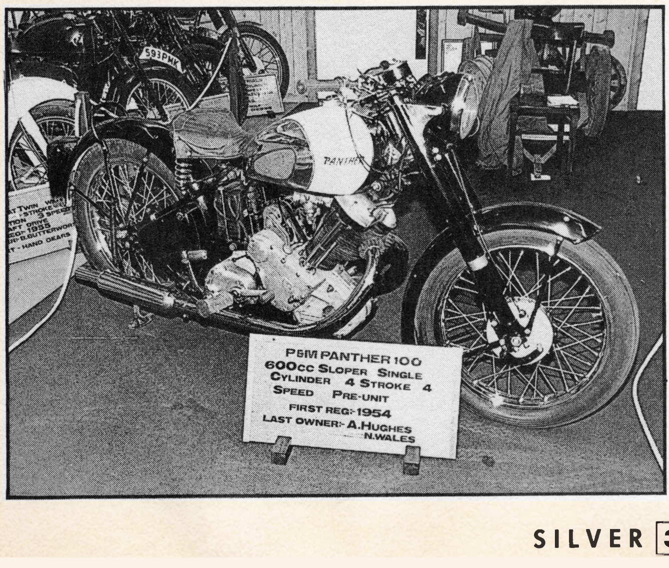
Since opening with thirty seven machines, six additional bikes have been purchased and four others have been changed. 'We will be adding more in the future,' says Sue. 'The aim eventually is to show more bikes and also allow the public access to the workshops where the bikes are renovated.'

The museum is of interest to all ages – older people who remember nostalgically the bikes that were on the road in their younger days and folk in their teens and twenties who have only read about the famous names but may never have seen them. Rarest of all is a Dawson Motorcycle DMW police bike made in 1967, which was originally owned by the Essex police force and is still running. Only thirty eight of that particular model were ever produced and so it's a real collectors item which has already won prizes.

Mike and Sue acquire their ever increasing collection whenever and wherever they can. One day late last year they were travelling along the A57 Manchester road when they saw a 1962 Triumph Speedtwin in immaculate condition speeding along in front of them. 'Not having more of those in the museum we chased after it, stopped the rider and asked if he would sell it to us,' recalls Sue. 'He was reluctant to part with it at first but changed his mind when he heard it was going on display.'

Amongst the machines is a New Imperial 46 DL 350cc Single, first registered in 1940 – a fact which is unusual in itself. The bike has two very interesting talking points. The makers, New Imperial, had run into problems due to the death of founder Norman Downs, and the firm had to be sold. It was Jack Sangster who came to the rescue and by early 1939 he was in control of the company. Due to the change-over of ownership the new Grand Prix model never came into production, but the rest of the range continued to be made at Hall Green in Birmingham.

Sangster then planned to move the New Imperial to the Triumph works at Coventry, where space was available. This occurred in August and from then on the two firms had the same address. The range shrank to four basic unit construction machines in 1940 and then simply faded away. Like many others, it wasn't revived after the war, so 1940 registered machines are few and far between. The other point of interest about the machine is because the unit construction engine's primary drive is direct to the clutch with no primary chain, the engine has to run backwards to give forward drive to the rear wheel.



Another intriguing bike is the Vincent Black Shadow 998cc V-Twin 4 stroke 4 speed unit construction first registered 1955, which is in an unusual shade of blue. Mike explains that Vincents were known to have produced only a few machine in Egyptian blue for export to America and now the couple are currently awaiting confirmation or denial as to whether this in fact is the original colour, or is just a cosmetic exercise by a previous owner.

4880
WIN CYLINDER FOUR
4 SPEED UNIT
NSTRUCTION
REG:-1966
ER:-B.MOSS

The museum contains a Velocette MAC 350cc, first registered 1935, which was recovered from a hedge at Porthmadog, near Caernarfon, where it was found to have a tree growing through the headstock!

As a point of interest, Mike has purposely left the remains of the tree in place.

Some of the bikes had already been renovated when Mike bought them, others are displayed as found. In fact 70 percent of the bikes are runners and the couple regularly ride a '59 Royal Enfield Crusader; a '60 Velocette Viper and a 1943 BSA 600cc.

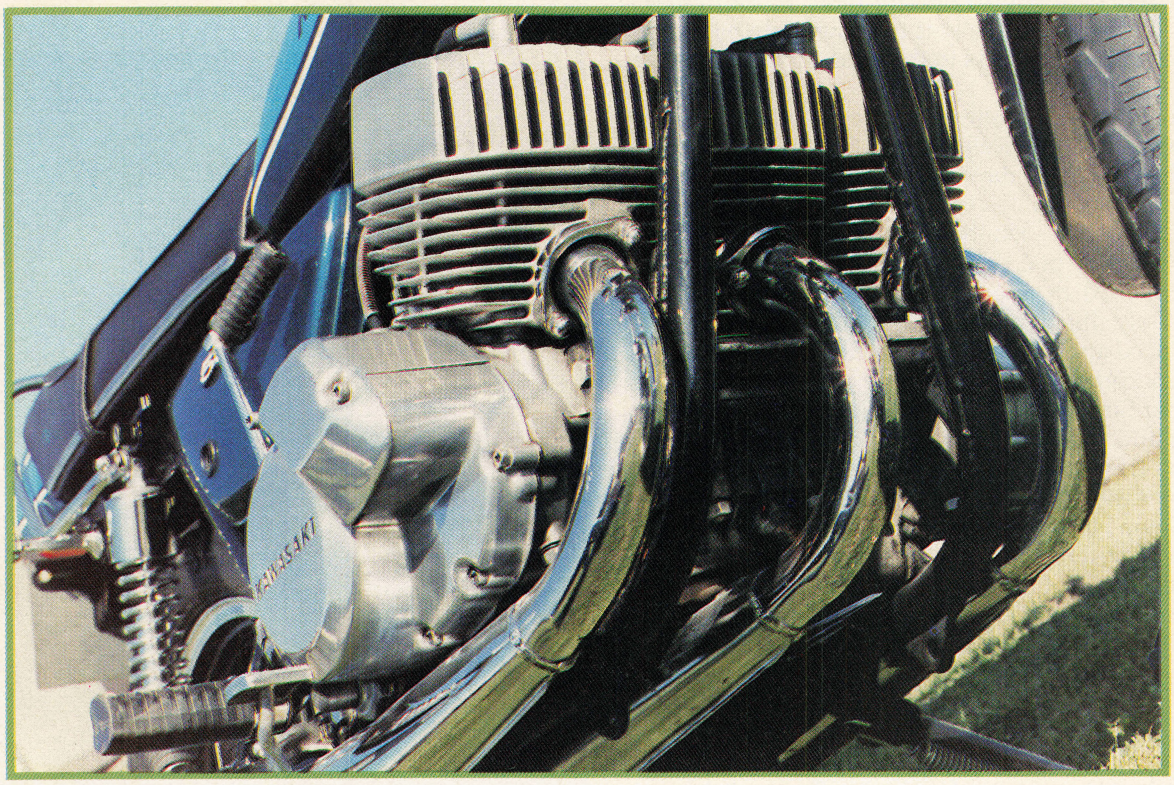
Mike believes, above all else, that bikes should be ridden, not simply kept as exhibition showpieces and rich men's toys, but should be used and enjoyed on the road.

'Forget the 100 percent originality,' he stressed. 'Do anything possible to keep them on the road, even if this means using parts from other machines as was done in the past. If more people had been interested in keeping bikes entirely original in the old days, maybe we would still have a British motorcycle industry!

The museum is open daily from 10am–6pm from March 1–December 1. Saturday and Sunday during the winter months from 10am–6pm. Admission is £1 and under-fives are free. There is access for the disabled.

(Photos: Hugh Williams)

MACH VII



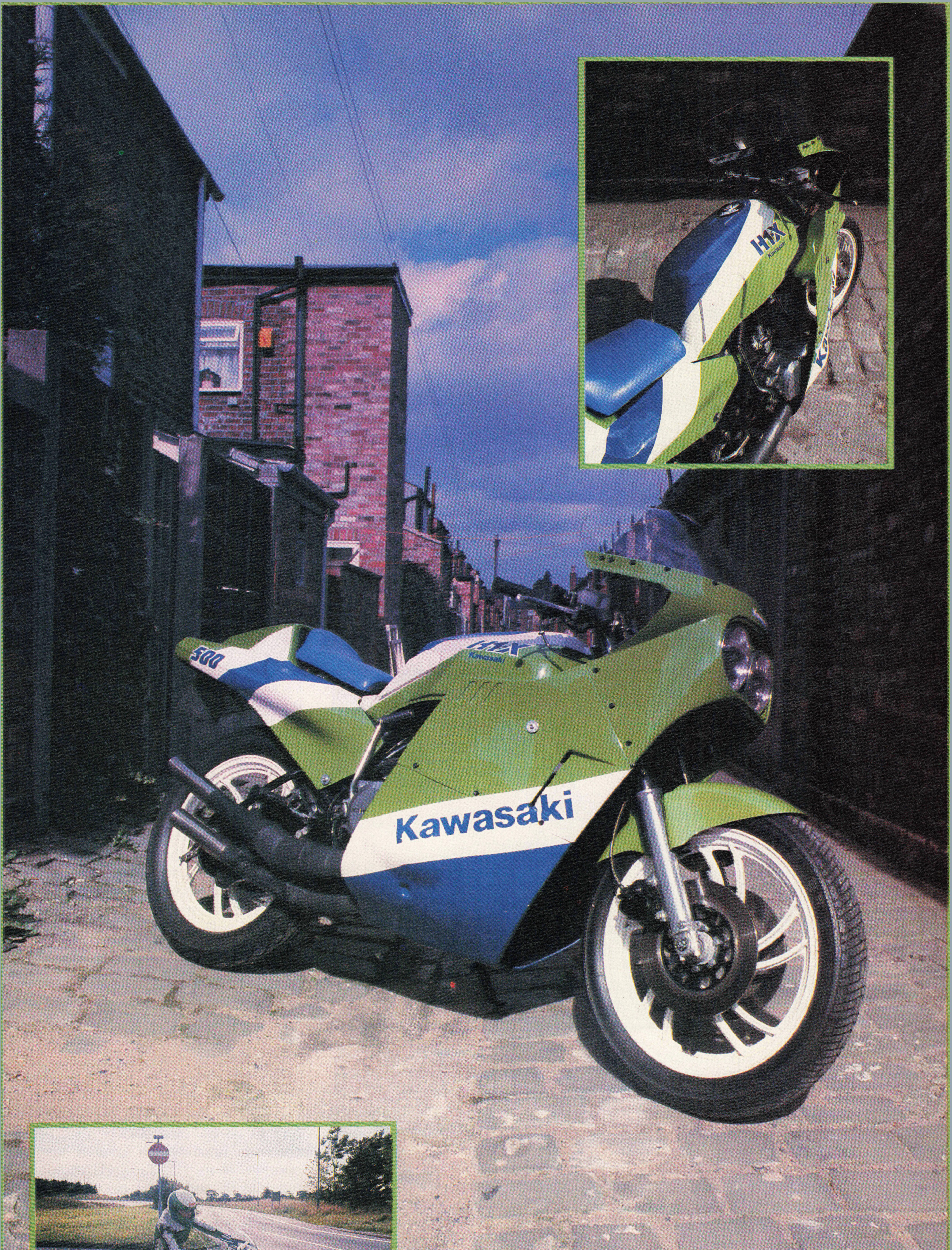
Andy Hornsby happens across a triple helping of Kwacker triples from the Pennines.

It always comes as a great surprise to me, to find such machines as Kawasaki's triple of yesteryear achieve 'Classic' status. It wasn't that long ago that they were shattering ear-drums on every street corner in the country was it? I suppose the decreasing numbers of them around these days has had some sort of bearing on their new position in the hearts and minds of the people who would have cold-shouldered them a decade ago. So now, in the days when money talks, the Kawasaki racing greenback is legitimate currency and a goodly number of the old fire-breathers are destined to be lovingly restored to showroom condition, just to be buried deep in a cellar as a hedge against inflation.

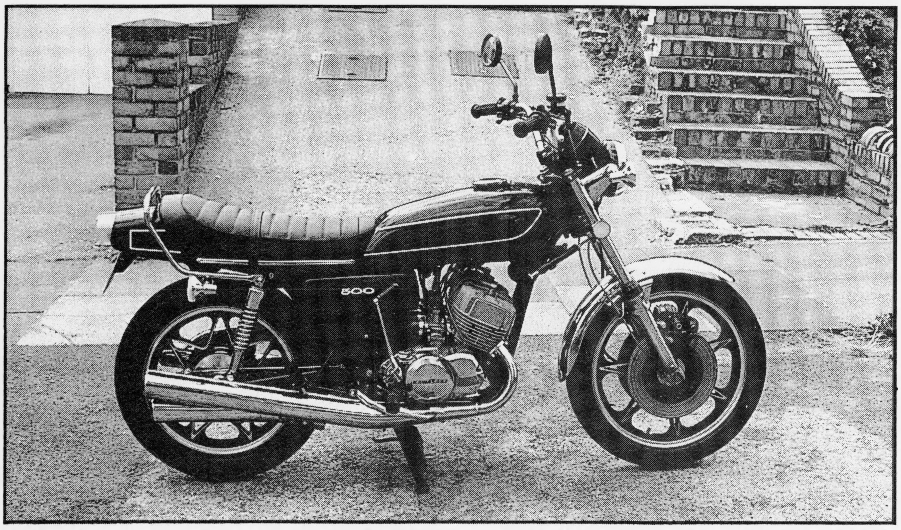
These three machines are certainly not going to suffer such an indignity, the H1 and the 'Green Meanie' are the proud possessions of Ian Manley, the 250 belongs to his dad Frank, an engineer, juvenile delinquent and, at first sight, a fine upstanding responsible member of the community. And both father and son still get the same sort of buzz from them now as they did the first time they rode them.

The baby of the bunch, the 250 Mach 1 is one of the first hundred or so of its kind brought into this country – hence the twin-leading shoe front brake – and is still very much as it left the factory. The original paintwork has lasted well enough in view of its usage, and gives a very good impression of how the Japanese marketing policy made such a quick impression on the UK market. Although it lived very much in the shadow of its bigger brothers, it is no sluggard itself: a point which it is all to keen to demonstrate given half a chance. I was going to mention that perhaps such people should have grown out of such childish pursuits but then, when you look around at the sort of people who still get their kicks on the Kamikaze Kwacks, it is evident that the bikes bring out the big kid in everyone and rather than it being the case that they *should* know better, I reckon that they *do* know better and that's part of the appeal.

But even such people as these are all too aware of the handling shortfalls of the beasts, a problem which Ian attributes to the swinging-arm pivot which, he says,


H1X
Kawasaki
500
Kawasaki

KAWASAKI
250



should be torqued down to One hundred and fifty lb/ft according to the factory manual. Bearing in mind that there aren't very many commercially available torque wrenches that'll reach that figure, and the fact that the torque setting has never been widely publicised, I'm prepared to accept that perhaps the handling of these beasts is not as potentially lethal as it first appears. It has certainly improved the cornering abilities of his near-standard H1F appreciably, but perhaps Kawasaki should have taken more notice of this particular setting when they first built the bikes.

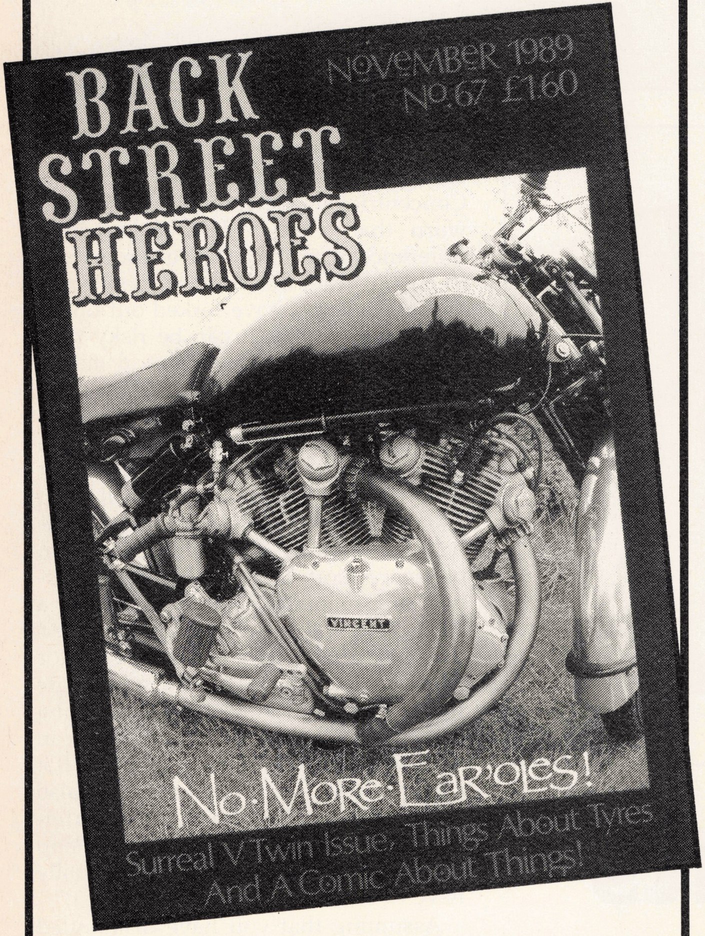
Having gone some way towards sorting out the standard chassis on the one bike, Ian decided to get a little more ambitious with the second and, in the tradition of the Rockers of the mid-sixties, he took the frighteningly fast H1E motor from its native Kawasaki frame, and put it into a chassis more suitable for the job. A 350LC rolling chassis looked promising: the lump fitted after surprisingly few minor modifications, as did the GSX-R fairing, RG500 tailpiece, Honda CX650E tank and clocks, and the results you can see for yourself. It all just goes to show what can be achieved with a few lessons from our Triton riding forebearers.

It goes without saying that it also goes like the proverbial brown substance from an unblemished digging implement, and is still more than capable of showing a fair few of its successors a clean pair of heels; which has still got to be one of the primary reasons for taking to the road on such a beast in the first place. Not only is it more sure-footed than the original bike, but it is also lighter, better braked, better sprung and better damped (another criticism often levelled at the breed or indeed any early seventies Jap bike) and it really has brought the whole plot bang up to date in terms of styling – even if it does pander to the current trends in race-styled replicas. The overall impression of a modern bike was borne out by the reaction of onlookers at the Isle of Man this year, when it was only the sight of the three oily expansion chambers that prompted many people to inquire further. The professional looking transfers, that Ian produces himself, may have helped matters slightly, proclaiming as they do that it is an H1X, and looking for all the world as though they were applied by the factory.

Regrettably – some would say inevitably – the combination of hard usage and excessive tuning took its toll and the bike had to be trailered back with a broken con-rod, since which time it has had another, more standard, H1 motor slotted into it, and it can be seen howling around once again.

The frightening thing about all of this is that, at an average age of fifteen years old, these bikes – and a lot of the first generation of superbikes – are about due to become classic examples of yesterday's motorcycles, in the way that Velocettes and Vincents were when the eastern sun first rose in the west. It makes you wonder how we'll look upon the ZX10 in another fifteen years time.

BACK STREET HEROES



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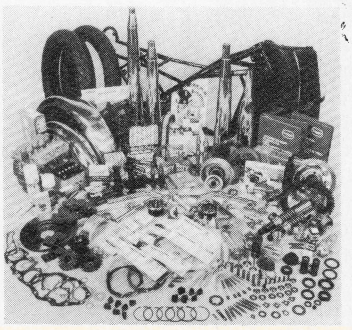

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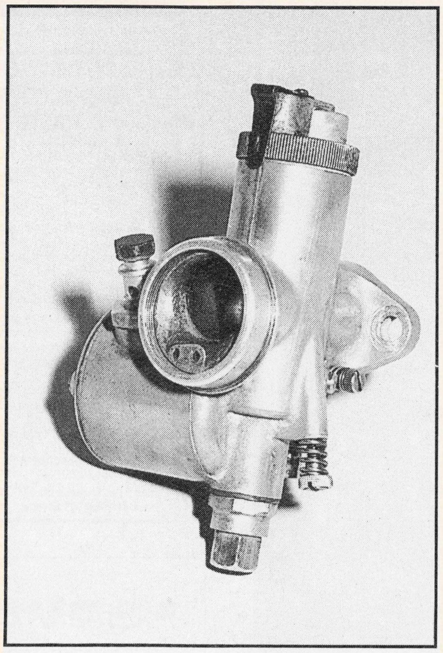
Monobloc Mutilations

Nuts 'n' Bolts

Tony Shiel delves deeper



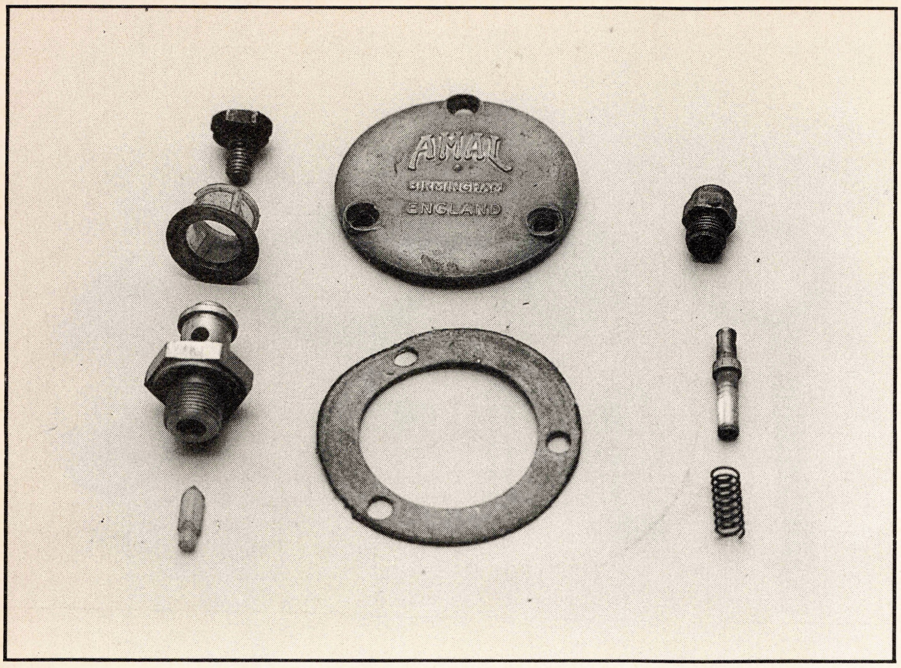
The image of frustrated British Bike Owners in freezing sheds and gutters across the country, desperately twiddling the carb screws of their newly rebuilt motorbikes in search of that 'tickover like a steam engine', or any tickover lasting more than two seconds under a grand, will evoke slightly embarrassing memories for many of us. The trouble is that carbs, like gearboxes, are often ignored during rebuilds or overhauls or, at best, given the most rudimentary attention, such as replacement of the O-ring and, perhaps, the Slide.

To expect a thirty-year-old carburettor, probably worn out after two seasons' use due to the indescribably cheap build quality in the first place, to perform well enough to grace a newly rebuilt engine, or even an old smoker, is as optimistic as cornering fast in the wet on Indian tyres. Most British motorbikes in use today are fitted with either an Amal Monobloc, obsolete since 1966, or a Concentric, still produced by Amal today . . . in Spain. Judging by the number of clapped-out Concentrics seen on restored British motorbikes these days, it seems, to quote a certain actor, that 'not a lot of people know that'.

Although Monoblocs were phased out for the 1967 season, many parts remain readily available at reasonable prices today. Bodies in good condition, however, are hard to find and 'new' ones are as rare as hospital beds. The most practical approach to a worn out Monobloc is to replace it with a brand new Concentric but if, like me, you are a Luddite, and insist on retaining the Monobloc, for whatever reason, perhaps the following tips, based on lengthy experience in freezing sheds and gutters, will be helpful. As far as Concentrics are concerned, if yours is so worn that a new Slide makes little difference, it seems a false economy not to spend the dosh on a new one, especially if you have forked out on an expensive rebuild. It can be risky running in a 'new' motor on a faulty carburettor. The stripping of Amal road carbs is very straightforward unless time's passage has caused fusing of the brass fittings to the monkey metal of which Amals are made. You will need good well-fitting tools, a source of *gentle* heat, penetrating fluid, and some form of secure mounting, be this the motorbike or a manifold-shaped jig held in a vice. You will also find an exploded diagram of the instrument useful for checking that you have all the requisite parts. Verniers are useful for checking trueness of bores, although you can always adapt something for this. A flat surface, such as thick glass, is also useful. When dismantling the carburettor, be firm but gentle as a sheared stop screw is not very amusing – you usually have to bin the carb body.

Assuming that you have dismantled the Monobloc without breakage, you should lay out all the components in order on your worktop. Allow residual petrol to evaporate and try not to smoke at this stage. Wipe off each component with a non-fluffy rag or kitchen roll. Now, we shall go through each part in order, listing possible faults to look for.

The most important part is of course the body. If this is in unredeemably bad condition, you may as well look for another. Starting from the top and working down; the threads on the top should be in good nick and extend to a



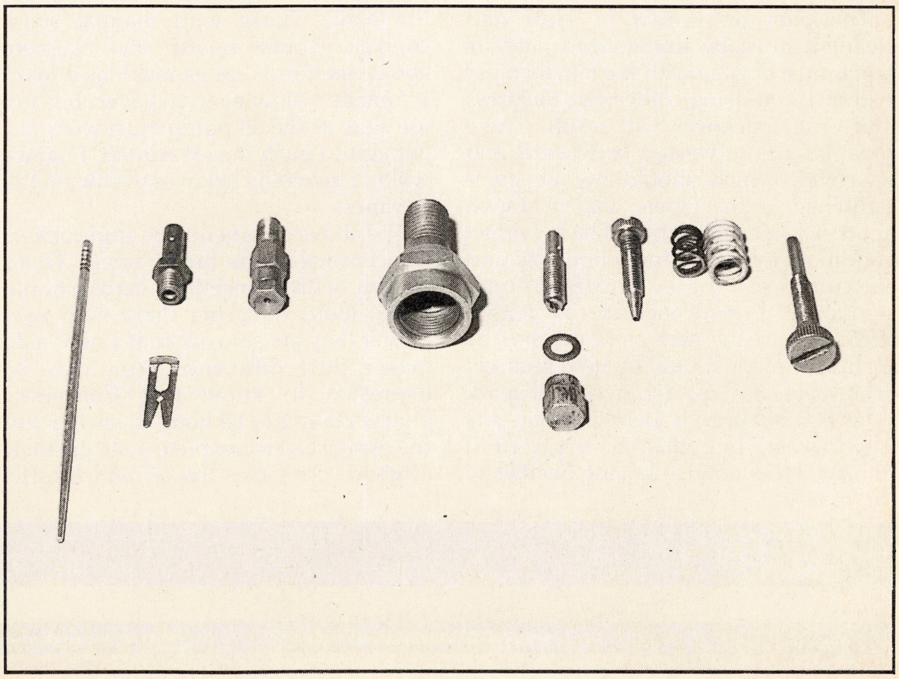
depth down the body, of *at least* 5mm or preferably more. If not, it will be impossible to tighten the top, with obvious results. Hard, if not impossible, to repair, thanks to the horrible material used, is the inside surface of the mixing chamber, where the slide goes, this should be reasonably smooth without dinks or similar damage. Wear is rectified by reboring or resleeving, a list of specialists in this field appearing at the end of this article*. Check for damage to the female taper at the bottom of the mixing chamber as the male taper of the jet block must engage cleanly here. All internal threads must be in good order and hold their fittings snugly. Pay particular attention to the pilot jet and air screw areas as slackness here will affect slow running. Check also the slow running mixing chamber, and fuel and airways, for obstructions or deposits as lack of absolute cleanliness here will also upset slow running. If the air screw is loose in its threads, this can be rectified by use of one of the various metal resin solutions, from Loctite or a similar firm, but go carefully. A last resort is the use of 'Plumbers Tape', which is effective, but can break up and lodge in the chamber, causing monumental infuriation! It once took me four hours to clean some out with bits of bendy fuse wire.

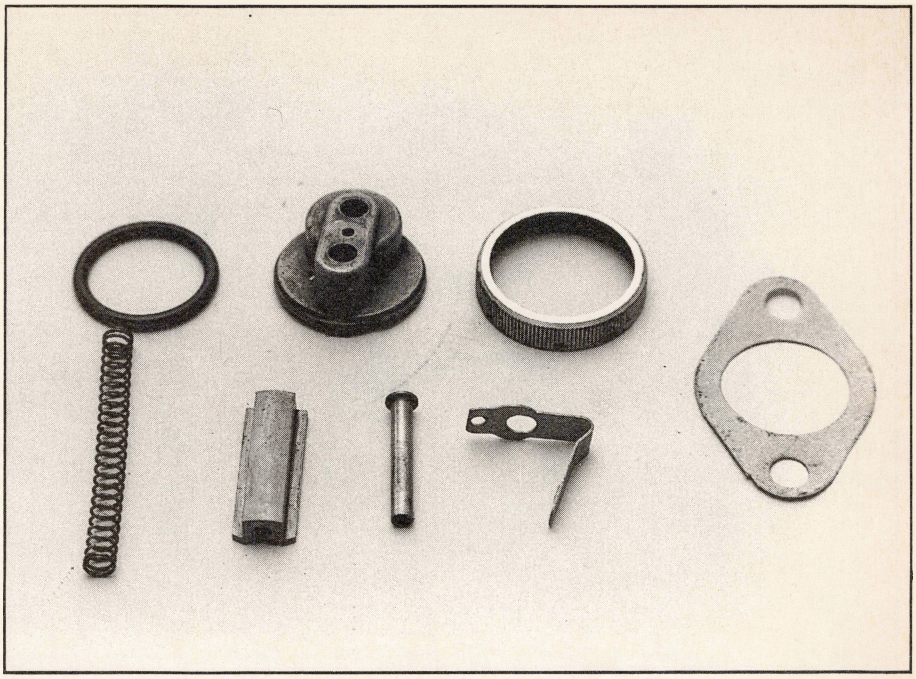
The float spindle must be tight in its housing otherwise the fuel height will vary. Loctite will help. All other airways and mating faces should be in good condition and free from obstruction. Examine the body from the manifold end. If the bore is noticeably distorted – it should be perfectly round – the entire body has distorted due to, most likely, thirty years at the mercy of gorillas with coke hammers and plumbers' wrenches. What happens is that the nuts holding on the carb are overtightened and the flange warps. Then comes the rubbing-down remedy, on flat glass and emery paper, or grinding paste, is applied, and the carb refitted . . . and overtightened once more! This goes on until the flange is very much thinner than it should be – so thin that it will warp around the O-ring – and the whole body 'squishes'. The danger here is that you rub down the flange, and gently nip up the holding nuts – as you should – but even this causes warpage. The first time you 'open her up', the slide jams, and, either the motor explodes, or, like me once, you find yourself approaching a roundabout on full revs, the clutch in, and your hand either receiving the full force of the magneto as you pull off the plug lead, or groping for the bellmouth to cut off the air. *Slight* warpage can be rubbed down. Clean everything thoroughly afterwards, and check that the manifold stub holes are in line and don't bind on the stubs. Do try to avoid using those neophrene rings passed off as O-rings – the carb will bend before it can compress them – use rubber ones instead. Finally, check to see if your body was intended for two or four stroke application. The brass 'guide' fixed in the centre of the mixing chamber, through which the needle jet feeds, will be 'slashed' at an angle for two strokes, and not so for four strokes. Not terribly important, but worth bearing in mind.

Next, the jet block. Needless to say, this should be free of obvious damage with one exception. If the mouldings which form a guide for the choke slide, are broken, this does not matter too much. The male taper should be in good condition, and all airways and threads should be in good condition and clear. The bore of the jet block should be the same as that of the Body to help smooth running. When fitting, do not forget to renew the paper washer at the bottom. The jet block is located by a small screw in the body which should not have any washer under it.

The carb top and cap ring should be in good order and capable of secure attachment to cut the risk of air leaks. Fittings, such as the click spring, and cable adjusters – if fitted, should be present and correct too. The float chamber cover must not show signs of warpage from overtightening of the three retaining screws. Repairs are hard, and it is easier to get a better replacement. A new gasket is a must also, as leaks at this point not only cause erratic running, but generally drip onto magnetos or dynamos – not a very good idea. There should be a short spacer between the float and the cover, made of brass. Replacements can be made of brass or plastic, but the spacer must be fitted to prevent undue movement of the float causing erratic running.

The float is very important. It must, of course, not be punctured. Brass floats can be repaired, but as new floats are available, it is easier to replace. Floats are made of brass, plastic, or a combination of the two. An area often over-





looked, and a cause of rich running on tickover, is the flat surface which bears on the base of the float needle. This must be free from wear or dents. A very slight depression is permissible, but none is better.

The tickler assembly rarely needs attention. Damaged parts should be replaced. The float needle and seat should be free from wear, in the form of ridges and grooves on the tapers. As needles are made of plastic or rubber-tipped brass, and lapping-in is therefore impractical, replacement with new parts, still available, is the easiest course. The banjo should be held to the float needle seating securely by its bolt with both washers, one of which incorporates the filter, in position. Fuel lines and taps should be in good order too.

Now, we turn to 'moving parts'. The slide should be replaced if damaged or worn, the classic wear pattern being the formation of circular shapes in line with the bore. Ability to rock the slide to and fro in the body suggest wear, although the body is also likely to be worn and a rebore or resleeve is the answer. If fitting a new slide, check that it is not a 'second' – with an off-centre cutaway – before paying your money. Check for damage to the cable seatings and needle clip housing.

The jet needle should be undamaged and held securely enough by its clip to prevent movement and revolving. Needles rarely wear, but the grooves should be in good condition – if not, replace the needle. Grooves number from the top so that 'needle position 2' will mean the second groove from the top. Monobloc needles are marked 'B', 'C' and 'D' for 375, 376 and 389 types respectively. Additional numbers appear for various applications, such as alcohol. The choke assembly rarely needs attention, other than repair or replacement of damaged parts and checks for free movement. If the choke is to be left out, do block off the hole with a suitable bolt!

The pilot jet should be clear and clean. It must be undamaged, and its taper must engage with the female taper within its housing, otherwise richness and erratic tickover will result. There must be a fibre washer between it and its cover, which should not be over-tightened as the tapers will be drawn apart. The air screw should be in perfect condition, a snug fit in its housing, and the correct sort for the carb. Short ones are for 375, and increase in length according to the size of the carb. The main jet holder should be held securely while the jets are removed. A spark plug box spanner is perfect. Main jets rarely wear, but must be replaced if damaged. Do not use sewing needles to clear obstructions as a 220 Jet will become a 400 Jet and you will be enveloped in black smoke! Needle jets worn oval must be replaced.

All parts should be scrupulously clean before reassembly. Use new washers and gaskets and consider fitting an air filter as these really do protect not just the engine, but the carb as well. Use old fashioned *rubber* O-rings and good quality Hallite manifold gaskets of the correct bore. Any heat sink spacer must also be of the correct bore. Avoid using 'soft' heat sink gaskets as these promote warpage. Use plain, not spring, washers under holding nuts which must be done up evenly, bit by bit, just lightly 'nipping them up'. Check the manifold for sealing by applying petrol with a small brush when the motor is running – leaks will cause the engine to speed up noticeably. Assuming that your timing is correct, and that the motor is sound, you can now tune your carb(s) as per the book. Those with manual spark control should retard the magneto about one third – or as much as it takes to obtain a slow even tickover, but not too slow as the oil pump must work fast enough to push the oil around. Engines will not generally tickover evenly on full advance.

The above comments are applicable to Concentrics in the broad sense. Those of you with Concentric carbs should think about replacing them with new ones if they are so worn that a new slide makes little difference. You may be interested to know that Concentric bodies alone can be bought, saving you the expense of a complete instrument or a rebore. As far as the air and throttle stop screws are concerned, check that the O-rings are in good nick.

Those amongst you who think I'm being a little fanatical should bear in mind the number of Vincent front cylinders and pistons which have self-destructed because the owners fitted worn old carbs for the sake of originality, or because the carbs' simplicity lulled them into the belief that carbs aren't terribly critical. The intermittent weakness, caused by the 'sucking and blowing' of the slide, caused frothing of the mixture and consequent pre-ignition, with predictable results. An extreme example perhaps, but food for thought.

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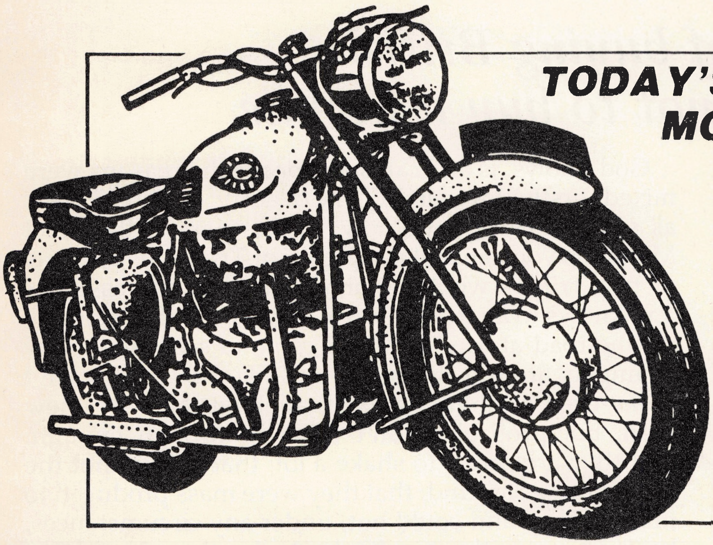

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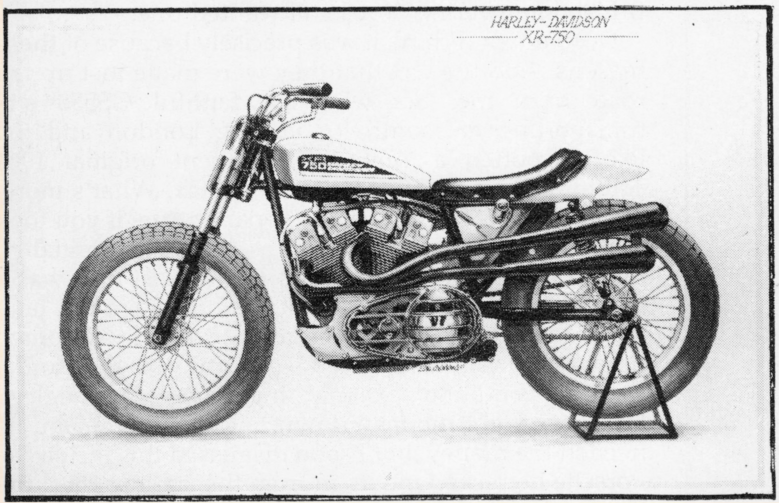

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SECOND-HAND BLUES

The trials and tribulations of buying British. Dave Lancaster learns how not to buy a Bonnie

The question you have to ask, or have I to answer, is why does anyone buy an old bike? I don't mean why does anyone buy a bike they had before – the re-living of a frustratingly well-spent youth as rationale for bike buying – but rather, why does someone used to more modern tackle, and not dissatisfied with it, go back two decades and acquire something old?

God knows, is all I can say. For me the reasons were mixed; firstly, I was living in Coventry. So what? Well, as some of you may know, in this part of the West Midlands you can still see plenty of Triumphs and one or two Tritons wobbling about, owned, one assumes and knows to an extent, by ex-employees of the factory up the road at Meriden. So I came to see quite a few Trumpets around the place, and liked them. I wasn't milky-eyed or anything like that about them – I knew then, but probably didn't think it through enough, that they are prone to shake a lot; that they're not the fastest things around; that they were mass produced to make money and could not, under any circumstances, be held up without ridicule, to be the pinnacle of British engineering. But I still wanted one.

Deep down, I think it was precisely because of these reasons. And the fact that they were made just up the road from me. So, with my faithful GS550 still transporting me south for visiting London and the like, I spotted a 'ninety-five percent original 1964 Triumph Bonneville' for sale in Halifax. What's more, it was only £500. The claim was partly true, if you took the frame and engine numbers as guides to originality, then the thing was 100% original; the rest of it was a mess of the first order. It had a red frame, a red tank from a later year, chrome rocker boxes, chromed timing cover, a seat sprayed – yes sprayed – red and a general condition of this magnitude of neglect. However, I got the man down to £400 – he *claimed* he needed the money, but I soon dismissed this inside the Porsche he picked me up in from the station – and the thing started first kick. It didn't sound bad; almost smooth in fact. Which, incidentally, I learned later is usually only a sign of a recently rebuilt engine – no chance of that – or a knackered one. I guess it was the latter.

But nevertheless I paid the man his money and followed a friend home to his place to stay the night. It actually seemed to run alright the five miles of this journey, and I gradually convinced myself of the undoubted wisdom of my purchase. You see, with a limited budget you have to think what I could have got for my folding stuff. They were at this stage going up in value – the year was 1985 – so I figured I should buy one now and perfect it stage by stage. I wasn't particularly fussed about originality, but most others I looked at had really been ruined, like this one in fact, only I, for some reason wanted this one.

After some discussion with my friend about routes home and the like, I elected to drive home that night. It wasn't cold and motorways at night are far less painful than during daylight. So, off I trotted to join the M1 and head southwards. I saw a petrol station and thought about stopping, but I was okay for fuel and tramped on – until the clutch cable broke. I pulled off, shifting down gingerly, and then proceeded to think what the hell was I going to do? I found myself riding around a service station in circles trying to reason the chances of getting back to Coventry without stopping. No chance.

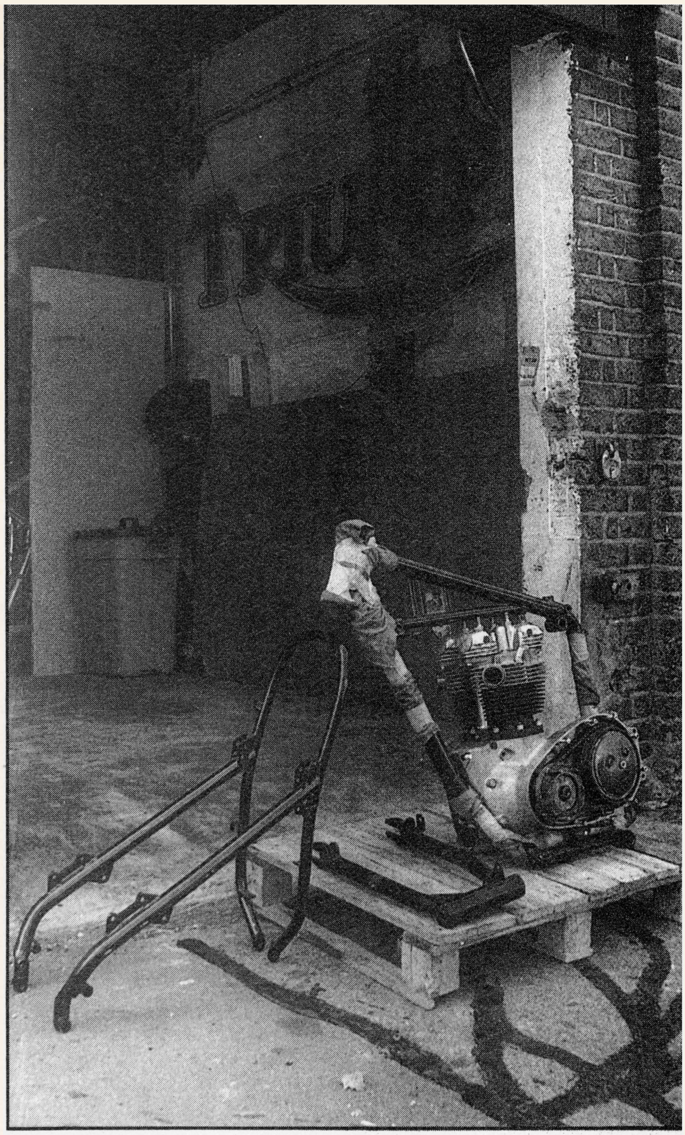
I stopped (with some amusement to the girl on the checkout) and phoned my northern mate back and explained. Next thing, we were flying back to his house – or garage more accurately – in his Simca to attempt a repair. Some cursing and swearing later a new nipple was somehow attached to the lever end of the cable and things looked, once again, hopeful. It even fitted. Thus, I was on my way again, at a steady 50-55mph down the deserted motorway to Coventry; an earlier plan to drive to London was soon abandoned in favour of a good night's kip. Well, I say a good night's kip, I didn't get home in fact until 3 o'clock, having had to delay the departure from north for the above reasons.

It got me home though, it started after I stopped numerous times to drink coffee and look at it – even with the vandalism wrought on it. I still liked the purposeful lines and simplicity of it all – and it made a wonderful sound climbing out of corners. The handling, believe it or not, impressed me. It seemed more direct and stable than other bikes I had ridden, mostly Japs, and more like the couple of Vincents I had sampled over the years. But then it would be. I wasn't pushing anything speed wise, just loping along enjoying the sound, if not the scenery. The engine was strong, I'd expected something like a gutless sensation to it, but once the method of riding was established, the torque of the unit could be harnessed to pull and chug like the large four-stroke twin that it is.

In all I was not too disappointed then. The colours and other trinkets – the Maltese cross carved steering damper adjuster still gives me nightmares – I could swallow; and the money paid was low, even in light of work that I was soon to discover was needed.

The next morning I woke trying to figure out where I'd been. Ah, Halifax, that was it. I looked outside the terrced house we occupied in Earlsdon to see the mighty Triumph still there, but with a note attached to the seat. Someone wants to buy it already I thought; well, I won't be swayed, it's mine to play with now and for a while yet. On investigation the note turned out to be some snotty neighbour complaining about the puddle of petrol underneath the bike – a fire hazard, the note said. Only if you set fire to it, I thought to myself as I wheeled the bike down six feet to start another puddle dripping down wind.

The plan was to scoot round to my girlfriend's and various privileged friends to show it off, and then make a leisurely course to London to dump the bike on my sceptical family – what's more, they had a garage.

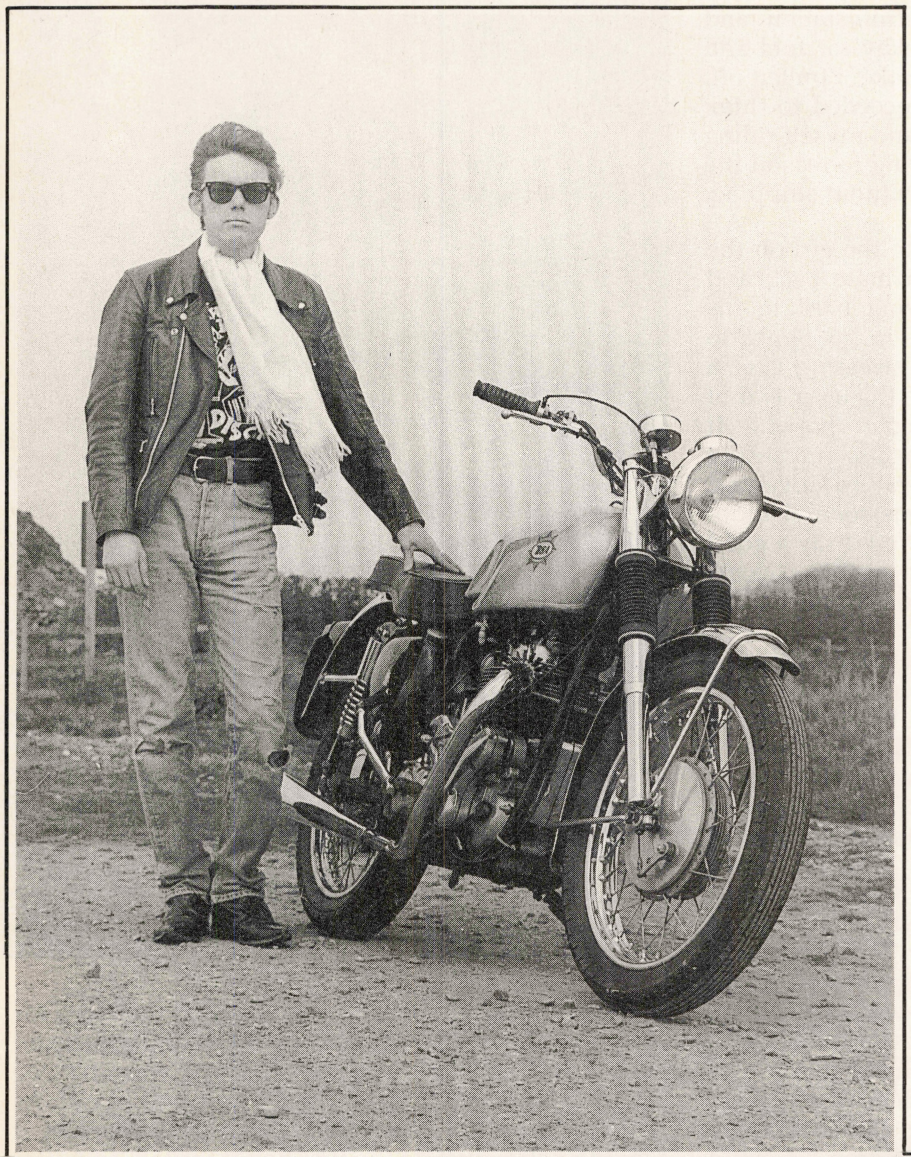


It started second kick and I set off round the block for the first call. Predictably, no one was as impressed and excited as I was about the bike, but I wasn't to be deterred and made to leave to my next port of call. As it turned out, the bike didn't like visiting people. It wouldn't start outside the first house visited, and after pushing it home, a clean of the carbs – as far as I dare – and charge of battery, it started and I wisely resolved to go straight to London without further ado.

It cruised the way proudly, taking the scenic route – I had learnt after two years in the midlands, the futility and boredom of the motorway – through Banbury and thence Aylesbury. The parent's house all too soon appeared and after the photo-call, brother and I planned *another* series of visits and general showing off in the vicinity. So, once again, it started first kick (I'm getting the knack of this British biking lark I thought) and we meandered our way the four miles to the first lucky person. Two miles down the road, it stopped, seemingly fuel again, and this time wouldn't start, full stop. A rope was brought into action, and one Triumph – a Mark IV Spitfire – towed another back to the garage. And there it lay, stripped of still leaking petrol, for some time to come.

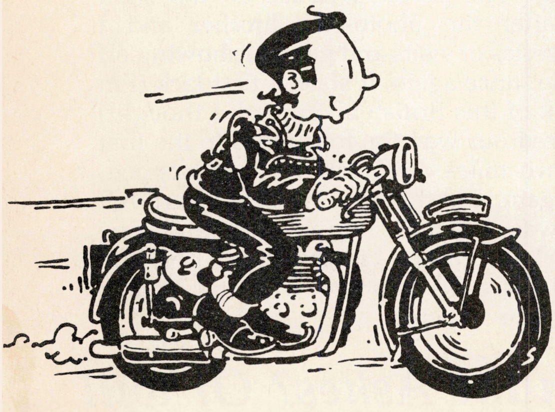
Next month: Will the Bonnie rise from the Ashes? Or will it appear as an unfinished project in Freemarket?

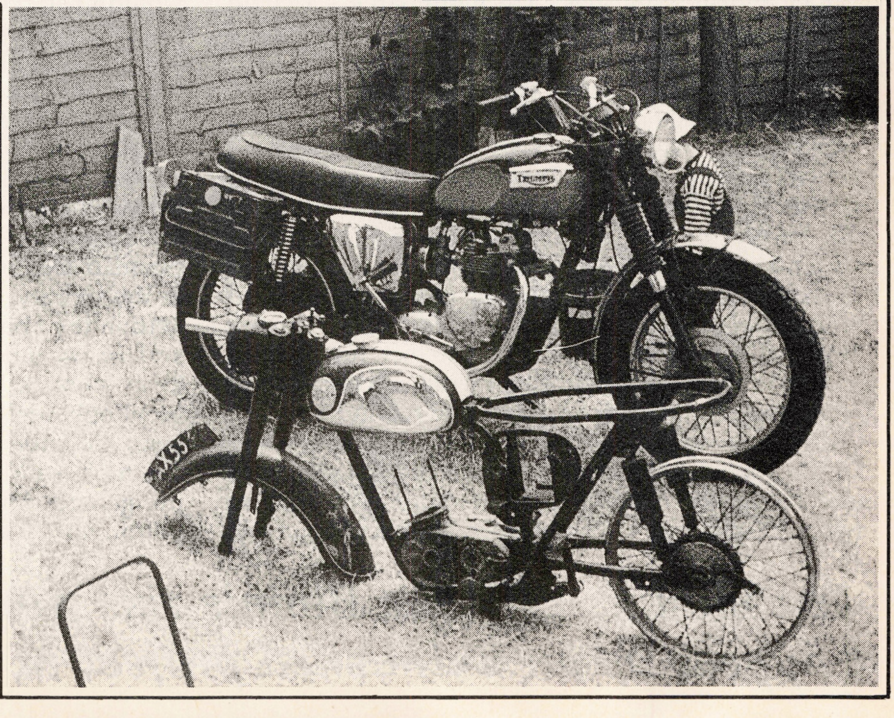
Readers' Bikes



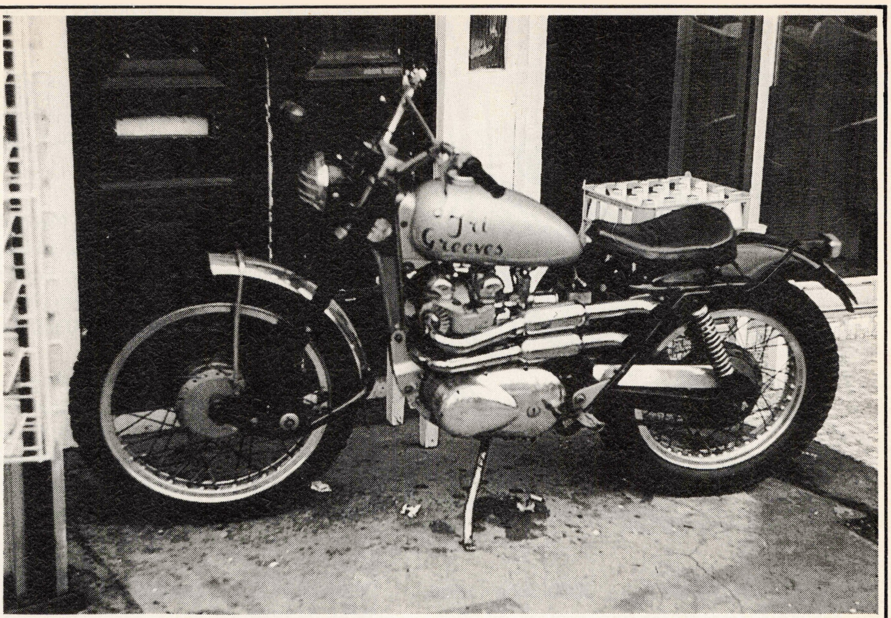
Julian Caddy's BSA twin is based on a 1960 A7 and is an every-day machine. According to Julian it's by no means original or immaculate but it's tidy and reliable. The frame and engine are Shooting Star; but the mudguards, seat and he thinks the fork coming from an RGS: the tank is an after-market glassfibre item. Julian says the front brake is appalling and the lights are pathetic, both items he hopes to sort out in the near future. Butit's for its lovely sound, smooth power and above all its style that Julian appreciates it. This Beezer can be seen running around the Alcester area in Warwickshire.

This is what the up and coming psychiatric charge nurse is riding these days. The nurse in question is Nick Rose from Salisbury, Wilts and the Triumph is a re-import from the USA which is used and abused on a daily basis. As you can see he's also looking for D7 Bantam bits if you can help give him a ring on (0722) 22346.

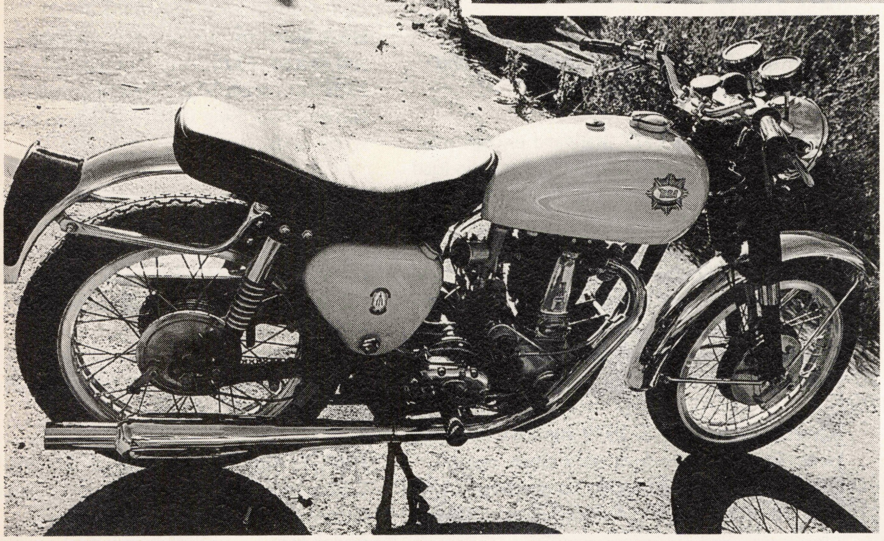




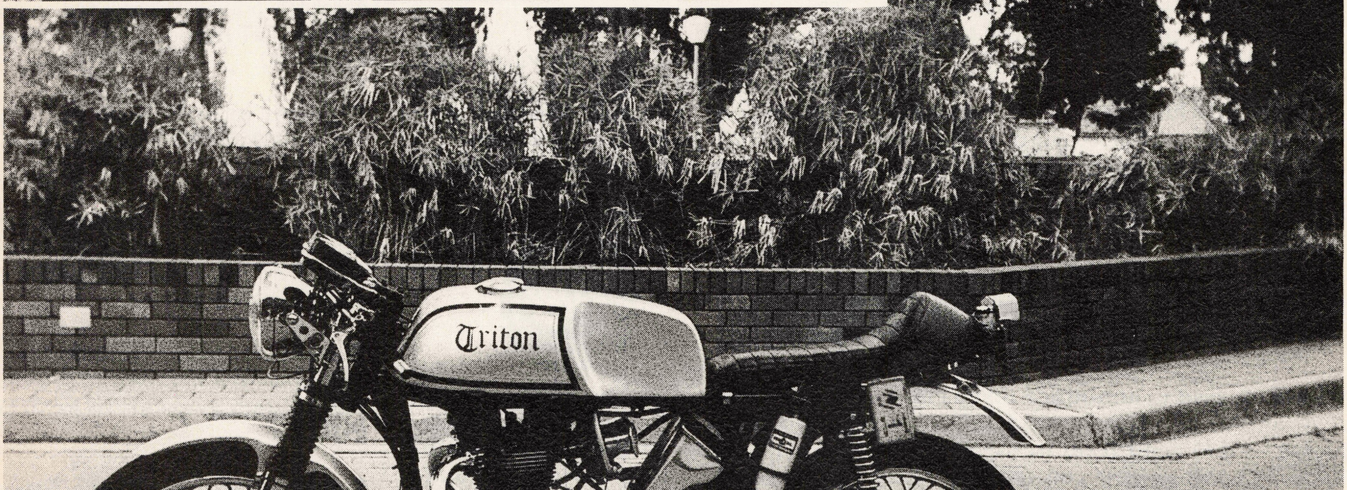
The snap of this Tri-Greeves comes from Paul Thompson of Shrewsbury but apart from drinking a lot of milk, we've got no more info.



Mr C. Bowers from Scunthorpe couldn't find enough bits to make a standard 1958 BSA B33 so he made his own sports version. The motor has a short conrod with Goldie piston and Goldie touring cams. The bike has a modified tank, and swept back pipe, alloy rims and a rev-counter have also been fitted.



G. Rattledge from Sydney, Australia took three years to get this Triton together having started with just the frame and forks. The slimline frame holds a Bonnie spec pre-unit motor and Triumph box. The Triton is ridden every day, rain or shine, and has seen some track work – as its owner is a travelling marshall at historic race events. Silver Machine does get to Australia, but is about three months late apparently.



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Tiger Cub 75% complete, distributor model £75. Frances Barnett 20T, 80% complete £60. Ring Mike on 051 486 3108.

B31 Semi Custom Swingarm frame, motor & box, 16″ cast rear wheel Roadholder forks, Norton front wheel, rear guard, custom seat and peanut tank. Needs finishing, plus few parts £475. B31 dynamo £15. Tel 0963 21236 evenings.

Yamaha R5 350cc 1973 Runner in good original condition. 26,000 miles £200 ono. Tel 0352 780075 daytime, 0244 546989 after 6 pm.

Commando Fastback Tank and tailpiece, good £75, Triumph 8″ SLS brake/hub £20 – or exchange Triumph unit 650 engine parts. Tel 098 85674.

BMW R100 RS W Reg, panniers, smoke grey, nice condition, sell £1500 ono or exchange for Trident comando or any 'interesting' machine. Tel Cleveland 0642 790428.

Cossack Jupiter 350, MoT 1990, Bring a 6 volt battery or a van £50.00. Tel (0254) 31975 Lancs.

Triumph 500 T100SS 1969 VGC, Taxed and Tested. Well maintained, excellent runner. £800. Tel Edinburgh (031) 554 4549 after 6 pm or weekends.

Harley Sturgis Page 36 Silver Machine October 1989. Immaculate 1982 1340cc. Totally rebuilt regardless of cost. Engine and Gearbox all new, belt drive, extra chrome etc must be seen £5000 ovno. Tel 0388 730645.

Moto-Guzzi Le Mans 1000 E Reg. Immaculate Red/White Black engine, 950. Dry miles, Rita, Coodridge, Lafranconi, Gear Conversion, MKII colour matched lower fairing, Guzzi Tools, workshop manual, all original parts available, mature owner, £4250. Tel 061 427 3330.

Yamaha US 250 Custom MOT £300 ono. Tel 0455 212849.

Triumph Trophy 250 Original MOT and TAX £500 ono. Tel 0455 212849.

Suzuki GT750B 1977 Standard except mag wheels. Good runner £650. Also small van load of BSA Bantam D7 spares £75 the lot. Tel Doncaster 842249.

MZ125 ET2 Spares for sale. Air box, RH side cover, crank, barrel, piston, head, chrb, petrol tank, seat, exhaust pipe, clutch basket, James Captain engine and complete exhaust (199cc). Phone John 01-942 1595.

Kawasaki KH250 SI 1979 recently rebored, new chain and sprockets very clean, needs battery and slight attention to electrics. £150 ono. 10 Hulse Avenue, Barking, Essex. After 7 pm.

BSA B31/33 or A7/A10 parts wanted – seat, tacho and speedo, battery carier, Lucas dipswitch, reat QD hub and brakeplate, pillion footrests, B31 primary chaincases, engine/gearbox plates, other cycle parts also required, plus Norton clutch. 01-523 2478.

1959 Royal Enfield Constellation totally rebuilt to original spec. Only test mileage since. Bike absolutely as new, maroon paintwork. Terrific investment and very practical transport. Ring 0489 896044 (Hants) further details. £2800.

BSA B25ss 250cc 1971. UGC Electronic ignition, new carb, chain, battery, fork seals, cables etc. T&T 1990 (June) New and old logbooks, 8000 miles. £750 or exchange for British Twin over 350cc. Baz 0795 661947, Kent.

Rickman Z1160 Blown top, nice chassis to run or recreate. £1000 or deal for reliable 4-stroke trail bike. Must be on road. Tel 0430 432050 before 8 pm.

Velocette parts wanted MOV/MAC Petrol/oil tanks. R/wheel, F/wheel (MAC cast iron hub) or hubs only. Any rusty condition. Also magneto and 10TT9 Carb 1 1/16″. Tel Wrexham 845666 (N.Wales).

BSA Bantam 1970 Good condition, taxed and tested, £325. Also Triumph 21 350cc full bath tub panels VGC. Reliable, taxed and tested £850. Ring 01 310 2263, evenings and week ends.

Triton 650 Pre-Unit Thunderbird, Bonneville top end. Wideline frame, gas flowed head, polished rods, immaculate condition, excellent runner. Taxed, MOT'd. Low mileage since rebuild. £1900 ono. Cleckheaton (0274) 874935.

Indian Enfield - in good condition. Phone 0273 890146.

1962 Triton Slimline. Stoved. 6T (650) with Commando Box. Many new parts: barrels, pistons, mains balances. Flowed head. Absolutely pristine. Full spec and photo available. T&T Haggle at £2800. Newbury 0635 47742.

D 125 trial unfinished rebuilt engine, spare engine £200 (0970) 612369. Aso some T140 spares.

Triumph T140 barrel and pistons wanted or barrel which can be rebored, ie standard or + .020 bore. Tel Leicester (0533) 707774 after 6 pm or weekends anytime.

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Trident engine unit VGC, also Trident bottom end and assorted triple cranks/chaincases etc. Export BSA '3' MKII fuel tank undented, nice chrome, evenings 01-427 0517, Harrow.

Wanted Would-be yuppie seeks British bike with JRT registration. Tel Jim (0705) 671164.

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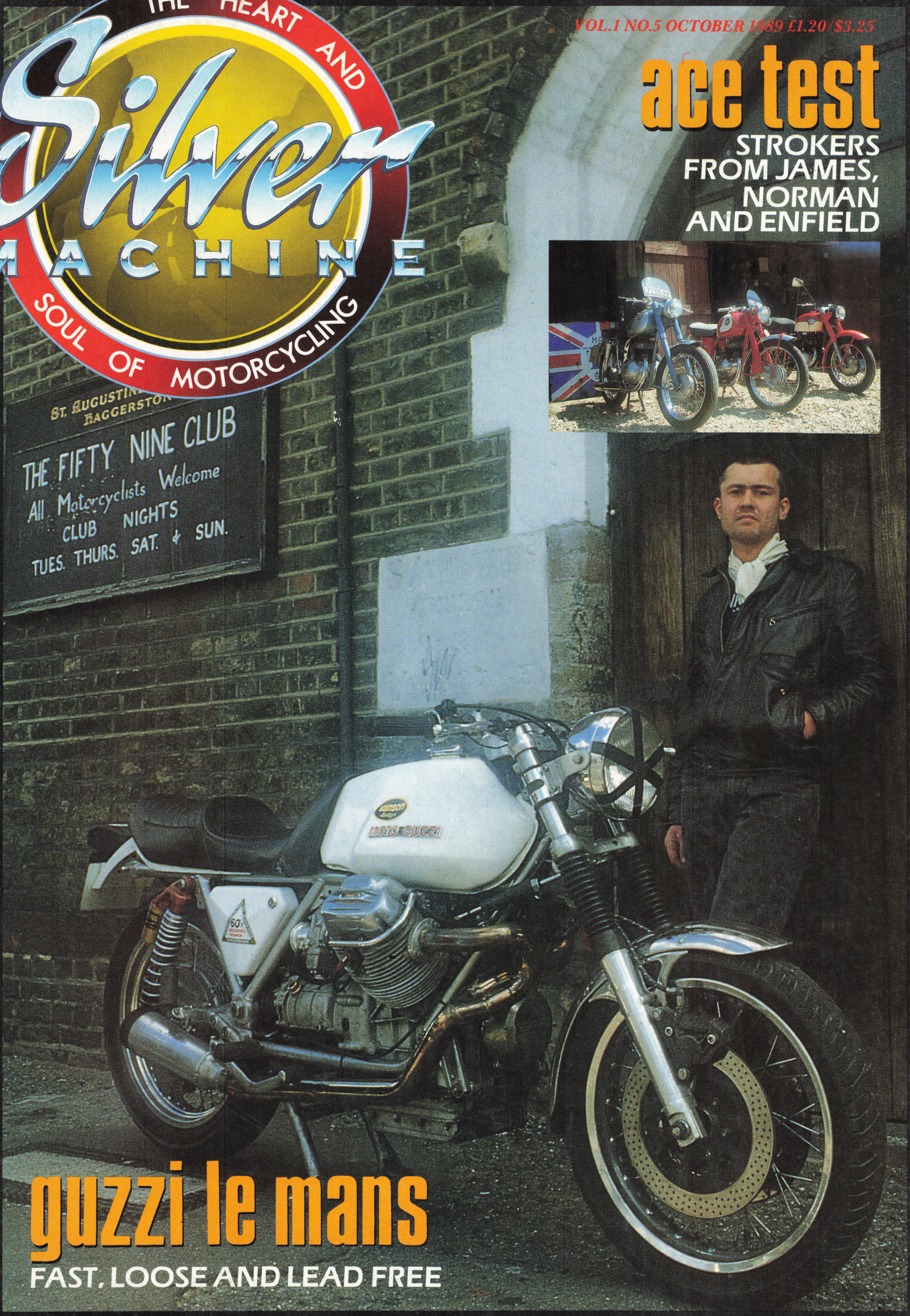
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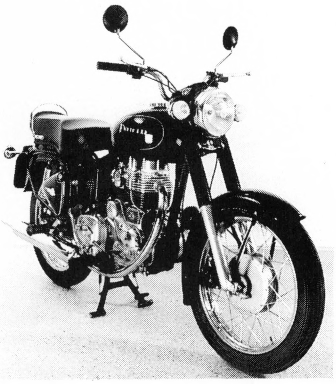
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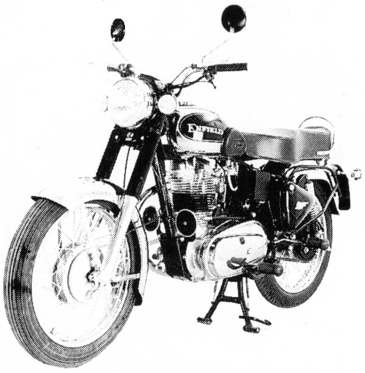
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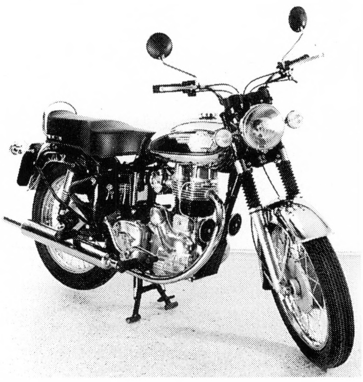
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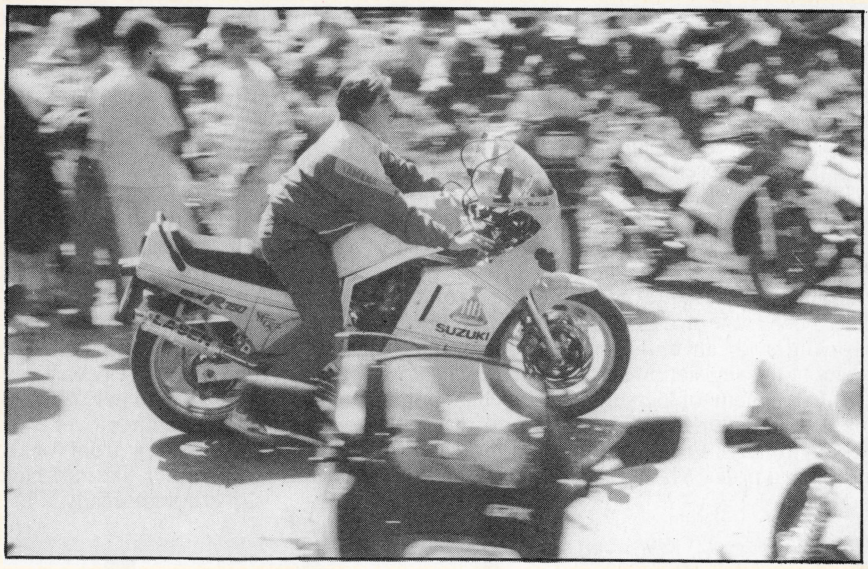

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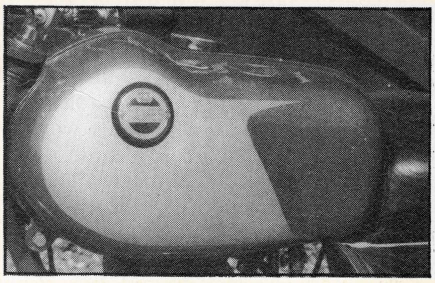

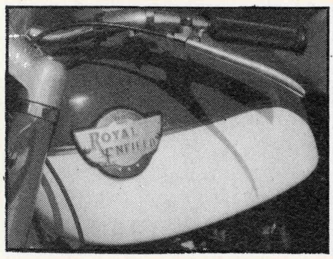

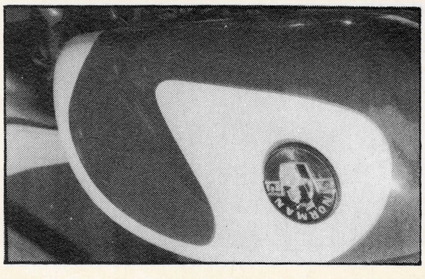

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NEWSLINES

EDITORIAL

Apart from being able to spend the weekend with Christine Keeler at the Savoy and still have change from five bob, one of the joys of youth was riding motorcycles without having to wear crash helmets. Helmets and goggles were worn as protection from the elements as opposed to anything else. Well I remember the pain caused by sub-zero temperatures on that strip of exposed forehead between helmet and goggles.

However tme passed, and restrictive legislation (to protect us from ourselves) was born. First learners were restricted to 250cc machines or sidecars (I'd go for the Z1300 and Sidewinder every time) then came the real blow, helmets made compulsory. In no other consumer area would the Government have been able to get away with compulsory legislation involving such an under researched product. But the worst aspect of this legislation and the reason why it was seen as such an infringement of personal liberty had nothing to do with safety, it was the fact that it took all the spontaneity out of picking up girls. From this point on motorcyclists had a cause and a focal point. MAG rose to the occasion and that was fine and good.

Unfortunately for MAG they are still regarded largely as a one issue organisation, that issue being well and truely dead. I remember a meeting not so long ago, of various magazine editors and MAG personnel to discuss just this problem but so far nothing concrete has resulted. Given that we have two lobbying organisations in this country MAG and the BMF each representing different ends of the motorcycling spectrum. MAG might be encouraged by the success of the "hairy" lobby in the States but that success is due to what they've got their arses on rather than to what comes out their mouths. Harley Davdson meant thousands of jobs in Milwaukee and York. On this side of the water the BMF are still the acceptable face of protest albeit a somewhat passive one.

Having survived th elong hot summer in the big city the temptation to wear my not very legal "shortie" helmet proved too much on several occasions. To wear no helmet at all would've been even better so perhaps we can find some middle ground here? If we are going to eventually have restricted use of machines over twenty years old then perhaps we could be exempt from wearing helmets whilst riding those machines rather like not having to wear seatbelts in older cars. Just a thought really.

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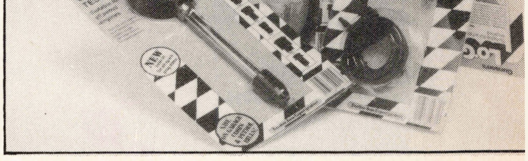
top shop

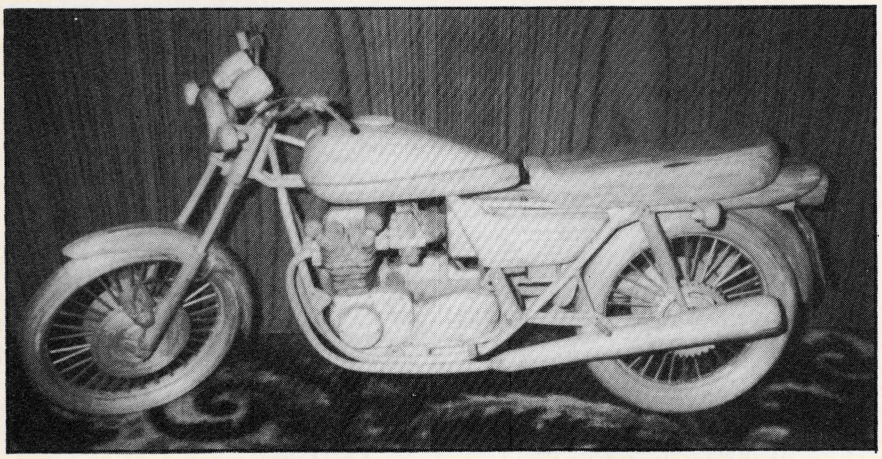
As you may have seen from the colour supplements, Harrods the top peoples store, are basing their autumn collections around racing themes one of which is motorcycles. The display includes an MV750, Kawasaki HIR, Cotton Telstar and a BSA Gold Star. The bikes were supplied by A Touch of Classic in Croydon and some of them have their racing history on display as well so give them the once over when you pop in to pick up your Gucci jacket!

……

gauges

Gunson have produced a handy range of guages that can be used to check both compression and vacuum. The Hi-Gauge comes supplied with adaptors for various plug sizes which means that it can be screwed in place while the motor is turned over. Lo-Gauge is the vacuum one and can be used for carb balancing. Prices are keen, Hi-Gauge £11.90, Lo-Gauge £9.90. Available from normal high street outlets. Silver Machine roving reporter Mike Wood, he did the piece on the Tiger Lounge in the last issue, is seen here gathering vital information on a Mike Hailwood replica. A replica of what we're not quite sure and it's rather dubious whether Mike the Bike's lanky frame ever graced this particular machine but we'll get to the bottom of it.





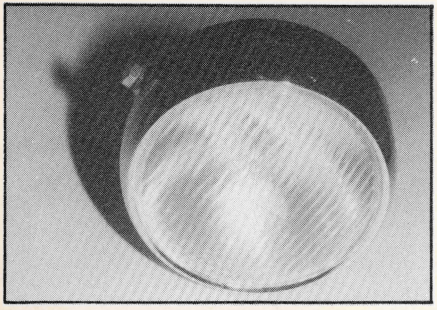
match that

This Kawasaki Z900 is made entirely from matchsticks. Leslie Sharp is its creator and he found time to build it whilst awaiting trial in Lincoln Nick. The model is 22in long and the suspension works. The photo was taken by his wife and the tank and seat aren't quite in the right place. Leslie started the project with two side on photos but later managed to get hold of a Haynes manual.

* * *

light chrome

MPS the mail order giants have got a couple of natty new items on offer. The universal headlight in chrome which takes six or twelve volt bulbs and measures 5½ in between fixing bolts and is priced at £1595. the other item is a pair of headlight mounting brackets just like they used to be with holes drilled and finished in thick chrome for £5.95. MPS are on (0803) 864887.



vin poster

Andover Norton have a new edition to their historic poster range. This one is of a full colour painting of a Vincent Series B Rapide from 1949. The bike is wanging round Douglas prom and jolly fab it looks too. Available from Andover Norton, Royce Close, West Portway, Andover, Hants SP10 3TS. It'll cost you £3.15.

tough stuff

Lenny Patterson of High Gear is about to offer some useful mods for Nortons and Triumphs. Norton twin owners with weak left hands will be interested in the hydraulic clutch conversion. This will fit all 500, 650, Atlas and Commando models and comprises master cylinder, slave yclinder and new operating mechanism. The price should be around £175. For pre-unit Triumphs there's a new rev counter drive using the original Triumph type drive box rather than the more common Smiths one. The advantage of this conversion is that the drive can be located in any position so that the cable won't foul swept back exhaust pipes. Suitable for all 4:1 revcounter clocks, the price including exchange timing cover will be about £85. High Gear can be contacted on 01-946 2434.

club stuff

The Wiltshire Branch of MAG now have a third meeting place in the county, The Railway at Salisbury. Meetings take place on the second and fourth Sunday of each month and all riders are invited, MAG members or not. For Wiltshire Branch information contact Baz Sullivan on (0225) 754725.

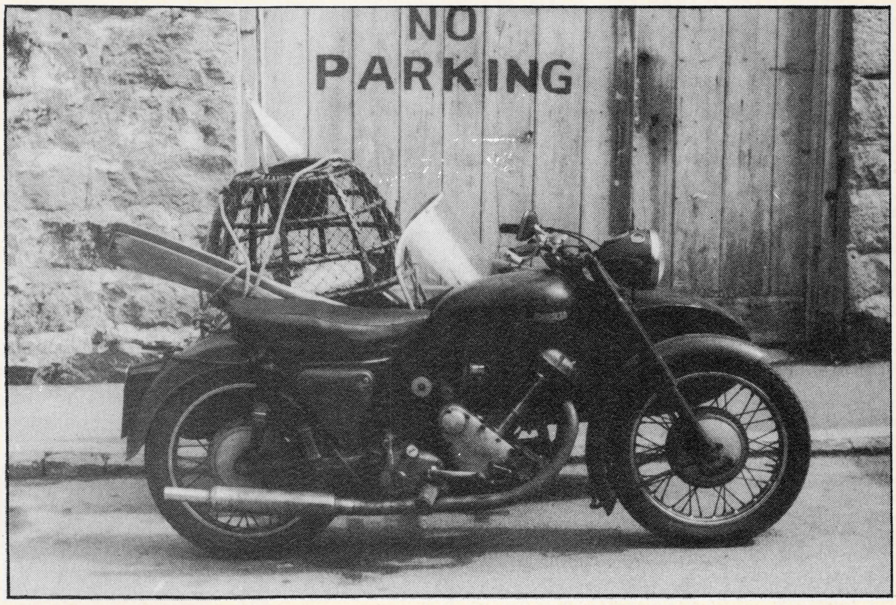
Roger Southon has taken over from Andrew Vale as Membership Secretary of the **International Laverda Owners Club.** All membership enquiries should now go to 11 Carleton Close, Great Yeldham, Essex CO9 4QJ or phone (0787) 237386.

The **Bucks British Motorcycle Club** have moved, their new Wednesday meeting place is the Polecat, Prestwood, Nr Great Missenden. All riders of British motorcycles are welcome even if they're only at the project stage. Secretary of the BBMC is Clive Humm, 9 Frances Street, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 5EQ.

Calling all **women bikers** in the West Midlands area! Anyone interested in starting a club or monthly meetings should call Bobby on 021-541 1477 during working hours or Ali on (0902) 23917 at weekends and evenings.

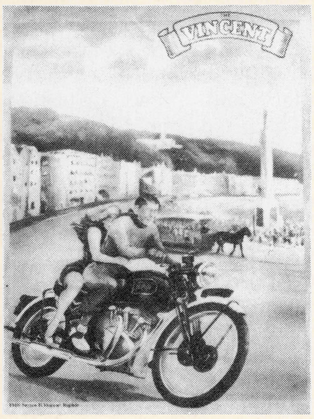
dog of the month

We wouldn't normally expect readers to nominate their own bike for 'Dog' but that's what Bill Maguire has done. The bike in question is a Panther M100 with a Watsonian Avon chair. Bill says it links his two hobbies, bikes and boats. The chair is usually loaded with fishing and diving equipment and according to Bill its ability to haul loads is matched only by its thirst for oil.



EVENTS

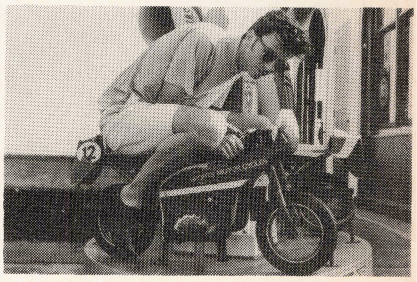
The Vincent Owners Club will be holding high speed trials at Cadwell Park on October 21. The event is open to non members and it should be a good opportunity to see the big Vinnies strut their stuff. If you're interested in joining the VOC the membership secretary is Adrian Cattell, 15 Grenfell Ave, Sunninghill, Derby, DE3 7LA.



BSA 89 will be happening on Sunday September 17 at Coombe Abbey Country Park, Brinklow Road, Binley, Coventry. This is an open day organised by the Owners Club and is open to all BSA owners members or not who can display their machines to the public. Awards will be given for Open Concours, Members Concours, Long Distance and Oldest Age Combination. Camping is available next to the site, for more information contact Mick Lee on (0509) 414871.

The first Welsh Motorcycle Exhibition will take place on September 23/24 at the Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells, Pwys. The exhibition will include Classic, Custom and Dirt bikes with club and trade stands as well as bike jumble. opening times on both days will be from 10.00am at 6.00pm and tickets priced at £3.00 for adults and £1.00 for kids and OAPs. You can get free entry if you turn up on a concours machine at the exhibitor's entrance — providing the bike is up to standard and it's before 2.00pm on either day. These machines will form a special exhibition in a covered part of the building. Outside events will include Quad and Helicopter rides. More information on (0934) 626159.

National Two Stroke Day is September 15 and the day starts at 10.00 at Stamford Hall. The event is put on by the Wartburg Owners Club and two strokes of any king are welcome.



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REVIEWS

"Matchless and AJS Restoration. All Post-War Road Singles and Twins."

by Roy Bacon

This is the latest, and according to the author privately, the last, of Roy Bacon's big marque 'Restoration' tomes. A large-format softcover with over 220 major illustrations, it's expensive but essential if you're into the mostly excellent products of Plumstead, which aren't as well served by manuals as other marques.

It represented a particularly difficult job for Bacon, since not only did data have to include the badge-engineered AJS and Matchless Marques, which did differ in some details of finish and components, such as their timing covers. It also had to cover the problematic "light" four-stroke singles, which is for those currently tempted by their comparitively low prices: as well as the 1965-on Model 33/G15 Norton-engined twins.

The author's aquaintance with the marques is not just theoretical, as evidenced by a photo of Bacon himself racing a 650 Model 31 CSR outit at Silverstone. But while a fair amount of general restoration tips are stirred in with the development details, Bacon's methodical approach does not often include (and space probably did not permit) much assessment of the changes he describes.

There is no mention, for instance, that the 1960 twin cylinder head revision made a very noticeable difference to performance. Personally I would have traded the general restoration stuff for more interpretation of the material presented, why things were done and what the effect was i.e. how the two short-stroke versions of the heavy roadster singles differed from each other, and from the traditional long-stroke? But the success of the book argues that Bacon knows what his readers want, and in at least one important case, the problem of modern replacements for the big singles' crankpins, he does provide valuable detailed comment.

Otherwise, the range and depth of the information is both unusable and stunning. Did you know about the export-only 550cc G9B/G10 twins? All right, then how about the optional all-red or all-blue frames and swinging arms for the sales push of '62? Or that the 'S' suffix, dropped for the heavy singles for 1959 as the rigid ones had been discontinued and all were now 'springers', was revived in '62 for sports versions with downturned bars and chromed mudguards?

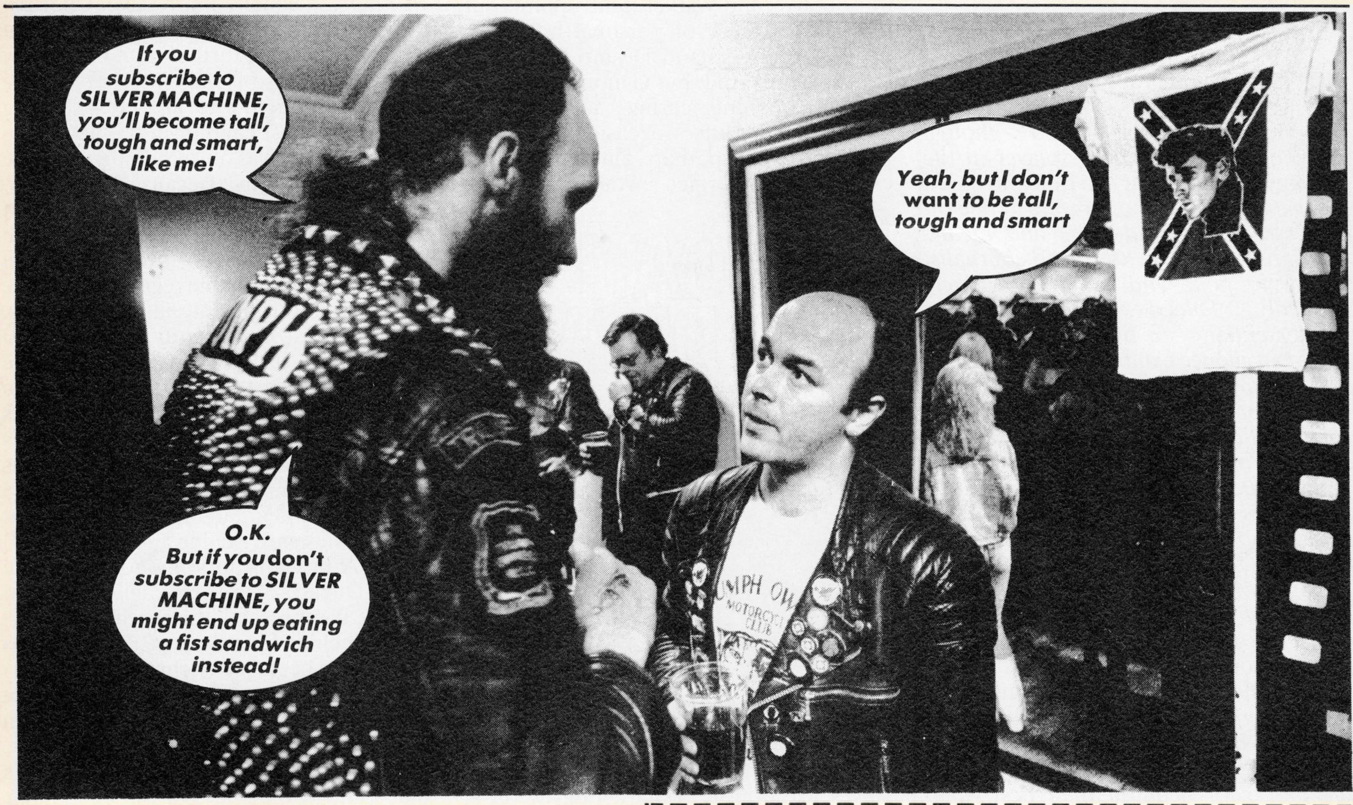
And for quick but comprehensive reference, the fifteen data tables at the end of the book are quite unique, including not only things like carburettor settings (which id unchecked are invariably the cause of rough running after an engine overhaul), but a quick-reference table of annual model changes — and a cross-referenced index for all the pictures. For the owner/rider, all this puts the Bacon books out on their own.

Published by Osprey, Price £18.95.

ISBN 0-85045-755-6

Steve Wilson.

* * *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REVIEWS

Bikes, Bikes, Bikes

'Have you got your papers?' my travelling companion asked confidently as we assembled on Chelsea Bridge for early morning tea and start down to brands. The Festival of 1000 Bikes is something I had never attended before, generally veering away from such 'super' rallies. They reminded me of the 'Super-groups' of the '70s who used to plague muddy fields with their music at 'Super-festivals'. Still, I knew all would be well when the tea stall was closed and Matt — 'have you got . . .' — found he hadn't got his.

So, instead of the troop leaving in a well ordered line through South london, dribs and drabs of us made our way as some had booked to run in 'parades' that started early. Brands was its usual chaos, but all credit to the VMCC for making some sort of sense of it and letting me book the Ducati in at the last moment for one of the parades.

There were more than 1000 bikes in attendance, Brian Sotham, chair of the West Kent section of the VMCC who organised the event putting the figure nearer 2000 bikes. And there was indeed some exotica: MVs, some well finished Tritons, well-used Vincents and more obscure examples. A Norton featherbed frame with Yamaha V-twin installed possibly the most wonderful piece of iconaclism. Visitors from overseas were in evidence too, with French and American accents to be heard around the pits and parade areas.

The runs round the circuit came and went, affording a good background of noise and constant action to watch. The only criticism one might have is the more modern classes were pegged down by the marshalling car to a painfully slow speed for the vehicles; which, while inviting comments of 'Well, it wasn't a race' and the like, I and others found disappointing. It's perhaps more dangerous creating a bottleneck of bikes at the front of the parade, than it is to let people go round at their own pace, which riders did anyway. Still, one can understand the authorities' reluctance to open the track to all-comers as an accident free day speaks volumes for the name of the VMCC and the integrity of the event.

The auto-jumble was very good, better, I am told, than the previous years and there was of course concours competitions and the like. Winner was Brian Oliver's 1962 Rocket Gold Star and pretty good it loked too. About sixty different clubs were in attendance, from the most obscure to the most modern — superbikes and like. This gave the event a refreshing 'open' feel lacking in some other rallies, and names in attendance included Sammy Miller and Colin Seely among others. Talk is that next year it may be a two-day event, one which I'm sure as many as this year will be attending.

Dave Lancaster

DUCATI DESMO

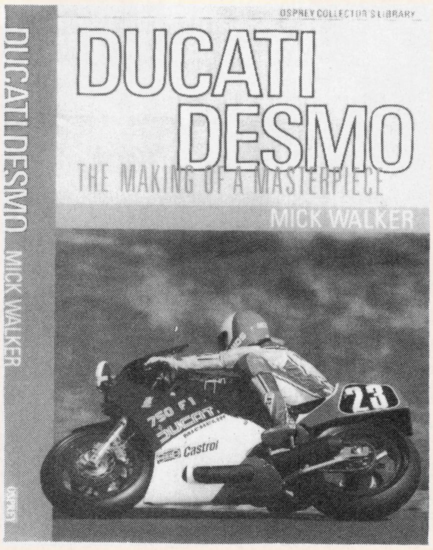
The Making of a Masterpiece

by Mick Walker

The Ducati marque is one that seems to attract books. There are several reasons: firstly as a small — though now obviously growing — player in the motorcycle market, at the Bologne based company has been more prone to one off successes, both road-going and racing, and more prone to the keen journalist willing to poke and pry long enough. Secondly, Ducati is italian, and quintessentially so; this means that the bikes can at once exhibit the most startling and accomplished engineering to ride and behold, but at the same time produce some real dogs and be excused the most appalling mistakes.

Still, Ducati Desmo — The Making of a Masterpiece, by Mick Walker does a sterling job in pleasing most of the people, most of the time. Walker, one time importer of the make, still has that almost boyish enthusiasm for playthings, in this case large Italian ones, and so the long-standing owner will get all that makes keeping the ageing V-twin worthwhile in suitable proportions. Vanity: the best of the bevel-drive twins — in the author's view the 750SS and Darmah SS — get all the praise for being at their best when ridden hard and being the 'pure sporting motorcycle'. Honesty: the darmah had 'in typical Ducati fashion one weak link' (the sprag clutch) and an I-told-you-so pride: in common with the trend of escalating prices a good 900SS will go for around £5000, if you want to sell it of course.

Well thought out too is the separation of the chapters — particularly two. The first is Ingegnere T, a biography of Ing. Fabio Taglioni from school to retirement. This is well written, well researched and informative, and Walker rightly points out that such a piece of personal history is needed to understand Desmo Ducatis, a concept nurtured by taglioni since his degree in engineering at Bologna University. But occasionally the perspective gets perhaps alittle *too* misty-eyed and heroic; Walker writes: 'Incidentally, he (Taglioni) thinks *five* valves to be more a marketing exercise, rather than anything else — Yamaha take note . . .' Frankly, however much one may admire the desmodronic valve system and Taglioni's impact on motorcycle design, I'm sure Yamaha are not unduly worried that a retired engineer in Italy thinks five valve heads a gimmick. It may or may not be, but it sells machines, which go very fast, and the same has been said of the application of the desmo system on road going machines by some.



The other non-technical chapter, *The Brothers*, is equally impressive. Charting the rise and rise of the brothers Castiglioni it again goes back further than previously recorded, and so it puts into perspective the businessmen who are now running Ducati. The last chapter in this 192-page book however was always going to be the most difficult. Why? Because *New dawn - Bordi and the 851 Superbike* is about what the Ducati name is blessing us with now and new models are coming on stream with remarkable regularity. Hence, the book is out of date already missing, perhaps most importantly, the new 900 Super Sport. It does however give ample technical explanation of the 851 and a brief history of its racing successes. in this context the *Belt-driven vees* chapter is also a bit of a disappointment. Much is made of the Paso in its various forms and indeed all the Pantah based bikes, except for Ducati's best selling model, the 750 Sport. A pity, for not only does this bike make Ducati, or rather Cagiva, a lot of money, it represents the so-called 'entry-level' machine for new owners so perhaps could have been better chronicled.

In all though, the book is worth the £17.99 price. Colour is unfortunately on only eight pages, but hte text is readable. The only majot criticism one might have is that some of the material will be familiar to owners of Walker's other works in the field: Ducati Twins and Ducati Singles. Otherwise, from technical and anecdotal standpoints the book is for all *Ducatisti*, both new and old.

Dave lancaster

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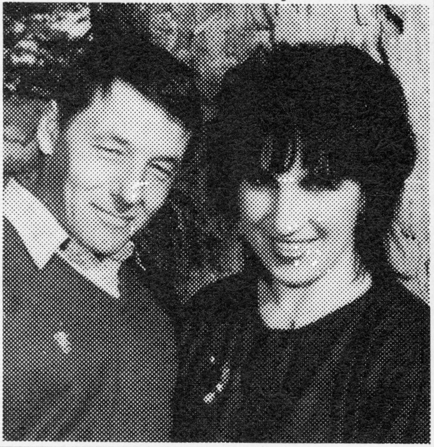

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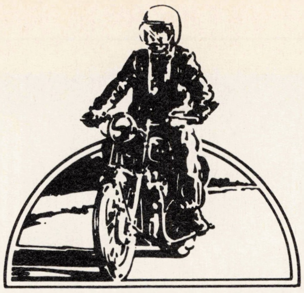


DOWN THE ROAD APIECE

steve wilson

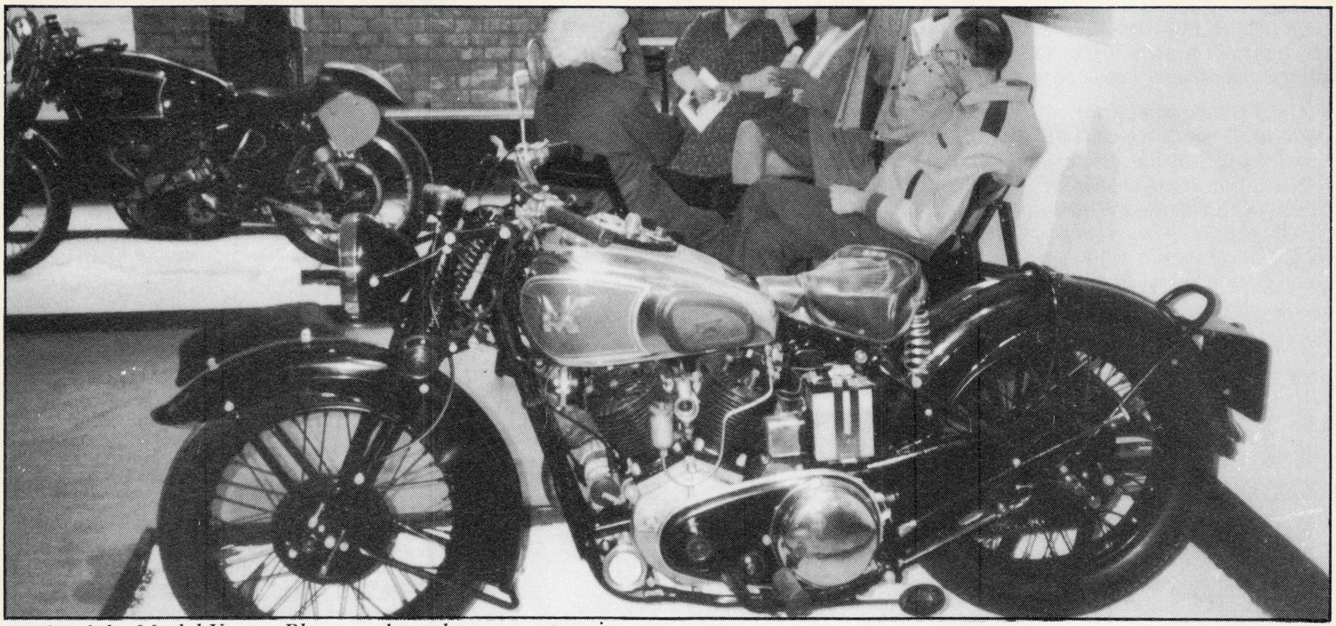
A regular look at people and events

Twenty years ago they shut down the AMC factory in Plumstead, home of Matchless, AJS, and in the 60s, Norton.

The men and women of the Borough who worked there were not going to let the anniversary pass without a celebration.

As reported in issue 1, to kick off there was an exhibition at the museum in Plumstead High Street, which attracted more visitors than any other they've held there. It was joined by a further display, this one in a Woolwich art gallery, no less.

Finally, on 14 May there were plans for an AMC Homecoming Rally in Woolwich's Beresford Square, with a mass ride around the old factory testers' route, up Burrage Grove, to Herbert Road, along to the top of Eglinton Hill, turn right to Academy Road, and then back to the works round the Arsenal wall.



Behind the Model X, past Plumstead employees meet again

The testers had sometimes been colourful folk. At the museum exhibition opening, and ex-employee recalled in particular one tester's nose. "It was like two pounds of mince hanging on the front. They whistled the French National Anthem" (in an allusion to General de Gaulle's famous proboscis) "when he walked through — he punched some of them young ones about 40 feet — he didn't like it. Well, he had a prang, and you know where he took it. Looked like *six* pounds of mince after that".

The testers were jokers themselves. They dropped water bombs from the factory's fourth storey workshop down onto the tanks of each other's test machines. Other favourites were putting a matchstick into the inside of the petrol cap breather hole of a colleague's test bike, so that after a couple of miles it stopped for no reason. The rider then removed the cap to check the petrol and let in enough air for it to run again for a couple of miles before grinding to a halt once more . . . Even worse was the bit of wet paper quietly placed between the points, with the engine going inexplicably dead when it had dried out.

"That was a devil", recalled Alan Jones. But these japes didn't affect the tester's skill. Alan was a rider in one stage of the 1969 Top to Top Air Race, from the top of the highest building in London to the tallest in New York. Despite not knowing the route too well, Alan got his passenger from the Post Office Tower to take-off in Heathrow in 20 minutes flat. He didn't know till afterwards that police were in (unsuccessful) pursuit of him most of the way; he was told that by Stirling Moss, whose time to the airport had been slower than Alan's!

For that one, Jones was riding a Commando, which for its first two years was built by AMC's successors, Norton-Villiers, at Plumstead, and the testers were heavily involved in the Commando's predecessor, the prototype DOHC P10 twin. whose frame, designed by Dr Stefan Bauer, was adapted for the Commando. The list of their requirements — light weight, a rubber mounted engine, a strong diaphragm clutch — turned up on Norton's successful twin.

Alan has remained with the old bike scene. He helped with the exhibition, providing tools and photographs, and every year plays host to the New Zealand racer Hugh Anderson when the latter comes back to compete in classic events. Alan has five Plumstead products at his home, from a rare '64 short-stroke 350 single, to a G15CSR. With many of the ex-Plumstead employees maintaining original bikes, one expected and got a fine display of them at the Greenwich Citizens Gallery.

The seven AMC machines were well lit and displayed to good advantage on rectangular trays of gravel, so that you could walk round and fully examine each — not always the case in the overcrowded and unimaginative ranks and rows of some museums and Club stands. The bikes, from a 1921 Model H Vee-twin outfit to one of the last Plumstead-built Commandos, represented a good spread of the factory's products.

Pensioner extraordinary, development man Vic Webb and the WD G3L he was given new in 1941

Vic Webb, another well-known Plumstead figure, was there with the WD G3L 350 single which he had been given, new, by the factory as his personal transport in 1941. It was one of the first with AMC's telescopic fork, and 48 years later, at the exhibition came with its original toolkit, panniers, and wartime headlight black-out mask. The light shade of Army Green was a surprise, but its originality could not be queried.

As a development man, Vic Webb was much involved with the G3L, the best loved forces bike of World War II. In addition to a lightened experimental high-performance version of the 350, the G4, capable of 95mph but sadly never marketed post-war, Vic built versions with steel skis for the Russian front which "pirouetted happily", as he recalls, on test at Richmond Ice Rink. He also did a prototype folding version for Airborne forces, to replace the diminutive Welbyke.

After much more development and competition work, Vic Webb left Plumstead in 1952 for a highly successful career with Rolls Royce engines, ending up as Chief Application Officer responsible for re-equipping the entire Royal Navy with gas turbines. A one-time merchant seaman himself, on his retirement at 65 this extraordinarily active pensioner among other things found himself crewing on an Americas Cup yacht, as well as making a solo motorcycle ride right round Australia and up into Indonesia.

It was in off-road competition, usually under the AJS badge, that the AMC push-rod singles excelled post-war, and the exhibition included two nice versions of the sporting thumpers. These were a 1956 500. This one saw regular road use in the late '60s and '70s for its owner, builder and property man Pat O'Keefe.

Pat was present at the exhibition's opening night, wearing cut-offs embroidered on the back with a large "AJS" logo flanked by dragons, and beneath that "Thailand Main Agents, Patpong Motor Co." Out there the big singles still slog on in daily use.

The second 500, aptly numbered ACU 71B, is a rare works special, successfully ridden by Mick Andrews in the 1964 ISDT. Selectively assembled, with inclined units where the production competition models were upright, battery-less ignition system, the fins turned off the hubs for lightness, and side-panels made similar so that the oil tank could be shifted from one side to the other, the Ajay's cylinder head still bears a tiny hole for the ISDT scrutineer's seal.

Though a pleasant, quite docile ride on the road, the special is a fair flyer, as Pat had occasion to find out recently on a rally to Ostend with a friend on a DBD34 Gold Star 500. Riding behind the Goldie, he found he was hauling his mate in through the gears, and finally bet him that the Ajay was quicker over half a mile. The rally ended in a deserted fish market, which provided an ideal venue for dragging. They blasted off the line and as Pat put it, "I never saw him no more." The AJS being 100lbs lighter and unburdened with a close ratio gearbox may have had something to do with it.

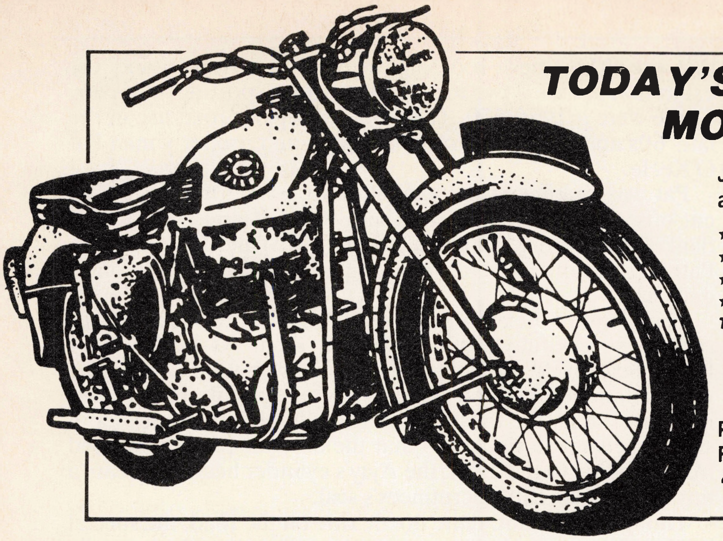
As with most of the other factories, Plumstead's post-war flagships were their parallel twins. The 500s were arguably the best of them. So Brian Relph's absolutely authentic 1961 version, one of the last of the 500c twins built, with less than 10,000 miles on the clock, is of particular interest. Formerly belonging only to a Glasgow undertaker and still bearing the original transfer from the suppliers, Kings of 55 Hamilton Road, Toll Cross, Brian tracked it down in a job lot being auctioned at Dunoon.

Brian is a well-known figure on the old bike scene. A professional despatch rider with ITN for 20 years, he owns a collection of 15 British bikes. The matchless was in remarkable order as it stood, a tribute to the factory's well-known standards of finish, with features like the unique oval megaphone silencers which are unobtainable today and provide a valuable comparison of the real things with the pattern versions currently on offer.

With the exhibitions so successfully fulfilling their purpose of evoking the best of Plumstead, it was a pity that in the end the Police lowered the boom, for safety reasons, on the intended ride round the testers' route. Such considerations didn't seem to bother their colleagues on the same day, with the 6000 riders travelling from London to Brighton and back on the Rockers' Reunion Run. But over 100 AMC machines as well as many others rolled up for a static display, concours competition and autojumbe in Beresford Square. All of which made the Home-Coming Rally a fitting climax to a nostalgic yet lively celebration of well-justified neighbourhood pride.

Pat O'Keefe's short stroke AJS 500 competition model from 1956

* * *



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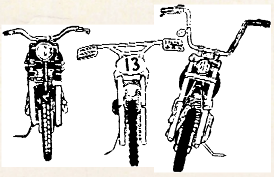

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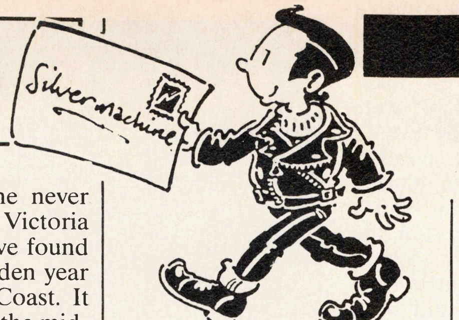


[redacted]

Seeing Red

Refering to Frank Westworth's article on the meris and otherwise of the Hesketh and Vincent, I cannot resist adding my two-penorth. I too owned a red Vinney for some years, though in my case it was a '53 Comet. Like Mick Page's model, mine was not red when I bought it. The inspiration for the colour change came in that never-to-be-forgotten year of the Golden Jubilee TT, 1957. Everyone knew the ton lap had to go — by one or both of two riders, Surtees or MacIntyre. My money was on Bob Mac.

Arriving on the Friday of the Senior on that brilliant summer's morning it wsn't long before we were examining some of the exotic private machinery parked on Douglas Prom. A large crowd concealed one machine, the object of all this admiration was a visiting Californian Rapide, gleaming like a fire in the early morning sunlight — all red! I can't remember making a conscious decision to change the Comet's livery but the Vinney came off the road for a strip down and I soon had bits hanging all over the place in their first coat of red celulose. Rebuilding was no problem and the Vinney was back on the road the following summer with much chrome plating added. Vinney riders have a habit of waving to each other on the road but to see them do a double-take at the red job was a total delight. Frank Westworth's comment on the bobbing headlight brought back memories for me too.

KEN BARNETT

Bristol

Rocky Commando

I've just finished pouring over the July issue and am pleased to announce that I found enough irritants to justify a letter. I should qualify this statement by pointing out that most of the "Classic" magazines are like *Playboy* to me . . . I buy them for their pictures.

I don't know what part of Canada Chris Welsh lived in when he was over here but I'll bet it was east of the Granite Curtain. It's a pity he never visited Vancouver or Victoria because he would have found that bikes may be ridden year round on the West Coast. It was especially nice in the mid-sixties. But that's okay really, most Eastern canadians don't know about us either. I miss Fred Whitworth. Young Brian is okay, for a while but I beg you to bring back old Fred as soon as you can. I am sad to inform you that the Norton Commando Roadster on page 43 is not a Mark III. It doesn't have the black cap bazooka mufflers, Lockheed front caliper, mudflap on the rear fender or a nice hook on the right rear frame loop for suspending the rear caliper. Also the camshaft isn't worn enough, the Amal slides are still too concentric and there's not enough free oil.

I have a real black-with-gold pinstriped '76 Commando MarkIII Roadster that I wouldn't sell for anything on this earth less than $4500. I have come to the conclusion that it is a joy to ride (in any month of the year) simply because for one brief and fleeting moment, I have managed to triumph over all the innumerable electrical and/or mechanical ills which otherwise generally afflict it. One of these days, the Black Hole will no longer attract all my discretionary cash and I might actually be able to afford a black leather jacket just like the one I wore years ago.

Just like the ones that appear all the way through your magazine. Then 1911 be able to hold my head high once again and ride off into the sunset.

I'm going now and you can't stop me.

JOHN KULA

British Columbia, Canada.

Big Enfield

With regard to the letter from R G Privett in the last issue and the 350 Enfield. The workshop manual was correct about refitting the big end bearings by reducing the end cap on the twins. But it needs to be done by a craftsman not a big hammer mechanic. For people who doubt it, I know of a Triumph running the alloy rod direct on the big end journal, as per Enfield, that covered 60,000 miles with no wear on the crank pin and had the rod re-bedded and is still okay after a further 40,000. Shell bearings were made because they were easy to fit, you only need a spanner, and they are cheaper not better. Regarding the 350 Bullet from India, if it's like the other products that have arrived here from India I would have serious doubts about durability, build quality and materials. They are trading on a name that earned its respect when backed by British craftsmen. The big end on the Bullet is not a split shell, it was like a roller big end with a thick bush instead of rollers. The mains were loose rollers running directly on the shaft and needed fitting with care. The Enfield India needs to prove itself in the long term, not a flip round the houses!

E HOLDGATE

Burnley, Lancs

What

Good Luck with Silver Machine but may I respectfully offer one tip apropos the August/September issue. For Royce Creasey to be controversial he has first to be comprehensible.

NIGEL STENSETT-COX?

Pontybodkin

Fed Up

Further to Julie Hallam's letter in issue 3. I agree about Classic Bike, they do seem er . . . distant. They had a stand at Brands for the Super Prix, I didn't see it open once on the Saturday. Anyway Julie does have several other mags to rear apart from *Back STreet Heros* and *British Bike* namely a young and promising magazine called Silver Machine. SM could take some tips from the other mags in particular BSH although I wouldn't want them to be the same. I just get fed up with a lot of the other magazines because they're so predictable, which motorcycling magazine isn't.

CHARLIE YORK

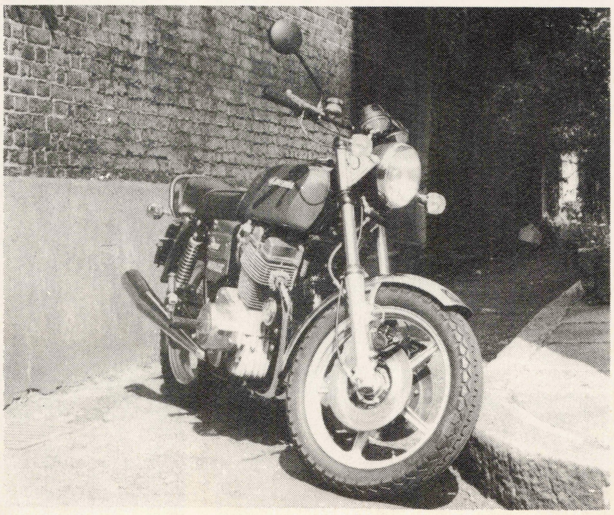
Addiscombe, Surrey

No Lav

I enjoyed the Ace Test by Rick on the triples but must protest at the exclusion of the Laverda. I agree that it would be unfair to use a Jota as these machines along with 900SSs, Le Mans, Goldies, Thruxtons and Shadows are true Classics and should not be matched with ordinary mortal motorcycles. A suitable choice would be something similar to my 1975 Laverda 3C which would've added to an otherwise excellent article. I enjoy your magazine which appeals to a dirty fingernailed motorcyclist who remembers when Brits ruled the roads. ▼

BILL MAGUIRE

Guernsey, Channel Islands.



ace test

Steve Wilson compares some 60's sporting strok

On a hot summer Saturday a few miles north of the highway to Southend our three test bikes waited, and these machines were appropriate to the season and the fevered mood on the roads. Forget weather protection and the sober black or maroon finish found on so many post-war British machines. As their names suggested, the Norman B4 Sports, James Sports Superswift and Royal Enfield Turbo Twin were 250 sixties sportsters, and with abbreviated cycle parts and two-tone colour schemes, they didn't care who knew it.

All three sportsters were powered by versions of the Villiers 249cc two-stroke twin, originally developed for use in three-wheel bubble cars. The Norman and James featured the 2T variant and the Enfield the later 4T. These sports machines came about largely due to a shift in motorcycling from mature riders on utility machines in the 40s and 50s, to teenagers out for fun in the sixties, particularly after 1960 when learners had been restricted to 250cc machines.

The blue and silver James and the Ruby Red and Ivory Norman, motorcycling's answer to raspberry ripple, were certainly flambuoyant enough for the youth market. They were and are also quite rare, since none of the Villiers-engined sports bikes did well in sales terms. Only just under a thousand Turbo Twins were built from 1964 to 1966, and only around 5,000 James 250s in any form. The test James, built in 1963, had only been registered in 1964 after languishing so long in South London's Anerley Motorcycles that the original owner was able to beat the shop down on price. These were all swansong machines — Norman sold out to Raleigh cycles and ceased production in 1962, and in 1966 James went under, Royal Enfield finished too apart from a few big twins, and Villiers themselves ceased production of engines for road machines.

This comparative lack of success was probably because anyone who had the money then to buy a new middleweight bike probably also had enough sense to

buy Japanese. The British bikes were priced around the £200 mark, and for another £50 there was the 24 bhp Honda C27 Dream, a 250 four-stroke ohc twin with electric foot and genuine 80 mph performance.

Today the story is different. With British bike prices rapidly rising, humble Villiers-engined machinery is attracting more interest, and these sports machines' oddity and pose value make them front runners in that process. But they also represent reasonably practical transport, as their owners' round trips of up to a hundred miles to the test emphasised.

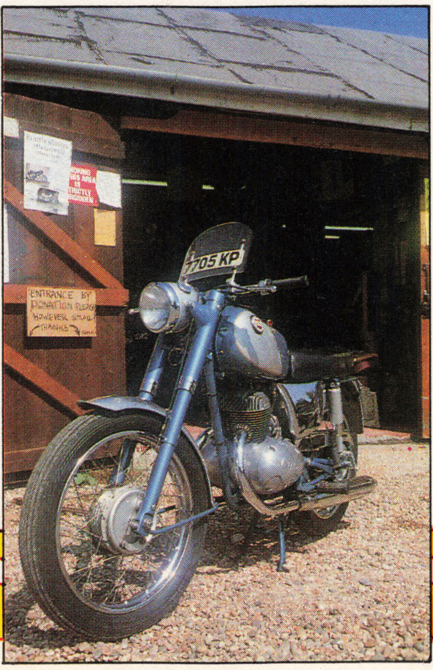
The owners were representative of the breed, regular riders who could be serious when appropriate, but were normally realistic to the point of irreverence about their machines. Each owned several other British strokers, and they were knowledgeable but not fanatical about originality. And they are all British Two Stroke Club stalwarts. Membership of the Club is just about essential if one of these unusual machines, and particularly its cycle parts, is to be brought to the good order it deserves. Alan Abrahams with the James has just stepped down after several years as Club Secretary. Dave Benson with the Enfield is a marque expert and was able to provide the third owner, Geoff Gilbert, with among other things a petrol tank for the Norman. Dave has a B4 roadster model himself.

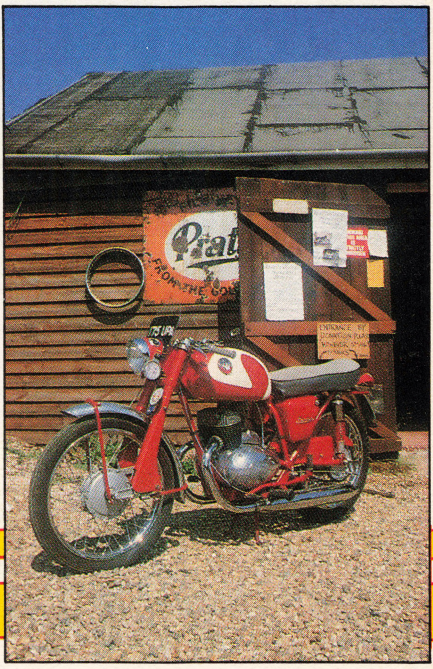
The venue for the test, the Battlesbridge Motorcycle Museum, is a low-key, informal endeavour by three enthusiasts, David Evans, Jim Gallie and Colin Thaxter. Currently only open on Sundays from 10-1 at no charge, it houses some tasty automobilia and about 25 machines. These are mostly post-war, but there's no sense of dust gathering on any of them, as even the old ones get regularly used. The museum also lays on Fun-runs and Motorobilia days (the next one is on October 1, and should be well worth attending). To lead us round a 25 mile Fun-run circuit of the local lanes, amiable David Evans, a London carpenter, nonchalantly fired up a 1923 Raleigh Model 5 350 single, and on it set a very respectable pace indeed.

The picturesque village of Battlesbridge, though only a few miles from the industrial swamp of Canvey Island, is set in a sort of reverse Bermuda triangle of quiet cornfields and narrow inland waterways, with the zig-zag of the bridges crossing them giving road-holding and brakes a good workout. At one point we turned down a narrow one-track lane connecting two sections of road and were suddenly surrounded by clouds of white butterflies. It was a well-chosen route and an idyllic day, so many thanks to the Museum and especially David Evans.

The purpose, though, was to sort out the vices and virtues of the three models. In many ways, they were similar, all with the twin engine, all with kerbside weights close to 300 lbs, all with seperate headlamps and single downtube frames. Yet both in looks and character they proved completely distinct, and despite some difficulties, one of them came out as an unexpectedly clear personal favourite.

ROYAL ENFIELD TURBO TWIN
JAMES SPORTS SUPERSWIFT
NORMAN B4 SPORTS





1961 Norman B4 Sports.

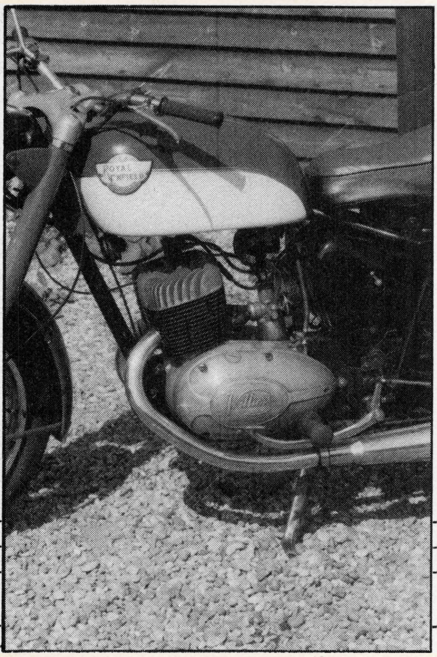
The Norman's styling is dominated by its big but shapely Italian-type four gallon petrol tank, with a hinged petrol cap retained by a flick-action racing-style sprung-wire device. The tank's finish, like the rest of the machine, is in ruby red, with gold-lined whorl-shaped ivory panels, set off by round, black, red and gold plastic badges bearing the Norman warrior symbol of the little Ashford, Kent concern. Geoff Gilbert painted and lined the tank himself, the white first, then the red, and then the hand gold lining.

There are a couple of permissible variations from standard on Geoff's B4 Sports. The polished alloy mudguards are proprietary items which Geoff has cut and shaped. The shock absorbers, by Armstrong like those in the leading link forks, originally had shrouds, but the exposed-spring type on the test bike were usually fitted as replacements. The nice chrome headlamp peak was again not original kit, but was an authentic Miller period replacement.

Where it counted, however, the B4's detailling was painstakingly correct.

The footrests, flyscreen and side-panels with their neat metal badges were all as they should be. The rear brake pedal, a rather Heath Robinson raised tubular affair with an adjustable stop for height, had originally been missing, but a Club member lent Geoff one as a pattern and he made up an exact replica himself. The skimpy rear chainguard, total unobtainium, had been lost too, but a stranger saw the Norman at the Festival of 1000 Bikes and offered an original one.

The Norman's dualseat is quite wide in proportion to the bike, but comfortable. It also felt the tallest of the three on 19 inch wheels, and the inverted handlebars plus footrests quite well to the rear gave a lovely riding position, draped over the big tank but in a way that felt natural and unforced, and sustainable for town and for long distances. The only exception on comfort was the kickstart, which despite being a folding one, dug gently into the right leg. This would prove to be the case on all three machines.



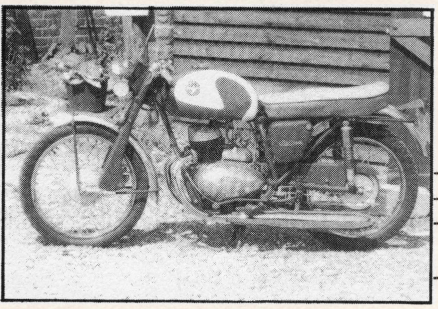
The 4T motor has square barrel fins and angled head ones for better plug cooling.

Starting up was also marred by the awkward position of the kickstart (remember the engine's car-type origins) in relation to the footrest. My toe came into painful contact with the right rest as I kicked the starter. Luckily the Norman fired up easily, though Geoff said it could be temperamental with plugs when heated up.

There had been no need to use the choke lever which protrudes like a bell-push from the ventilated cover over the carburettor and air cleaner. The cover is another authentic touch for the B4 Sports, and indicates that the model is fitted the smaller Villiers S22 carb, rather than the more normal sportster wear, the larger S25, which the cover would not fit. Norman compensated by raising their sports 2T engine's compression to 10:1, but Geoff didn't get on with that and changed it back to the standard engine's 8.25:1. Possibly as a result of this, the B4 Sports was rather down on power compared to the other two.

After a U-turn at the start revealed a wide turning circle, presumably from restricted lock due to the big tank, there were no complaints at all about the Norman's handling and roadholding. The B4 series had featured a new, lighter frame, still with steel plates for the engine cradle, like a Greeves, but with a rigidly triangulated rear sub-frame. However, the Norman's most distinctive feature was the use of Armstrong short-leading-link front forks. These were also to be found on some Cotton, Sun and Tandon machines, but the innovative Norman brothers had actually worked with Armstrong to develop the fork, which behind its shrouds houses Armstrong two-way hydraulic dampers, as well as a parrallelogram brake-reaction linkage. The fork proved to give precise straight-line steering and cornering, as well as the anti-dive qualities of the linkage under heavy braking. Well-matched with the rear units, it also soaked up the bumps in places like the butterfly lane in an impressive manner.

In fact the forks did their job so unfussily that one rapidly forgot they were unusual, and the 6 inch front brake was not really powerful enough to put the anti-dive to much of a test. The rear brake was a little better, and could be locked up at low speeds.



With its red and white tank and leading link fork the Norman has an Italian look about it.

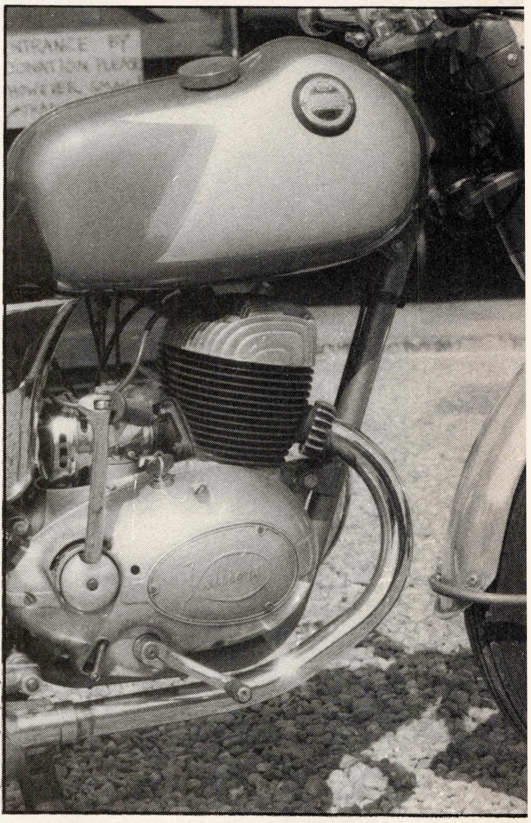
As mentioned, Geoff's Norman, which has only covered around 1500 miles since its rebuild, is not very fast. As well as being a little flat at lower revs, though it pulled cleanly enough, at the other end it seemed reluctant to climb beyond the 50 mph mark. Dropping a cog on the faultlessly smooth but slow four-speed box with its equally slow-to-engage clutch, soon produced only a stupefying, Stuka-attack type whirring scream, but no perceptible increase in forward speed. It was just as effective, and a good deal more restful, to change up and accelerate in fourth. Dave Benson wondered whether the noise might be down to the slightly suspect crankshaft which Geoff had used in this rebuild, but to me it just sounded like an engine screaming "There is no point to this as I'm not going to go any faster!"

One was left to enjoy the B4 Sports' steering and fuss-free road manners. The tall set-up meant that bend-swinging was a deliberate business, but always precise. If the bike's sporty appearance promises a bit more than it can deliver in terms of speed, this is certainly not the case for its handling and roadholding.

1963 James M25S Sports Superswift.

The Sports Superswift had the reputation as the bad boy of the bunch, and in this respect it did not disappoint.

Alan Abrahams bought the James a year previously, already restored for the second time, from an elderly neighbour who claimed it had never been ridden in the rain. But since Alan owns no less than two dozen British two-strokes and fifteen of them are runners, he had only recently put the James on the road.



The James was devoid of its rearset gear lever which made changes awkward.

The slim and attractive blue and silver machine with its Speedwell kidney-shaped tank plus chromed battery and tool-box lids was the prettiest of the three. Deviations from standard included the handlebars, later silencers, transfers yet to

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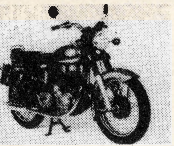

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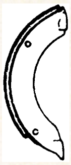

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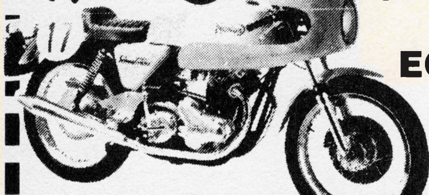

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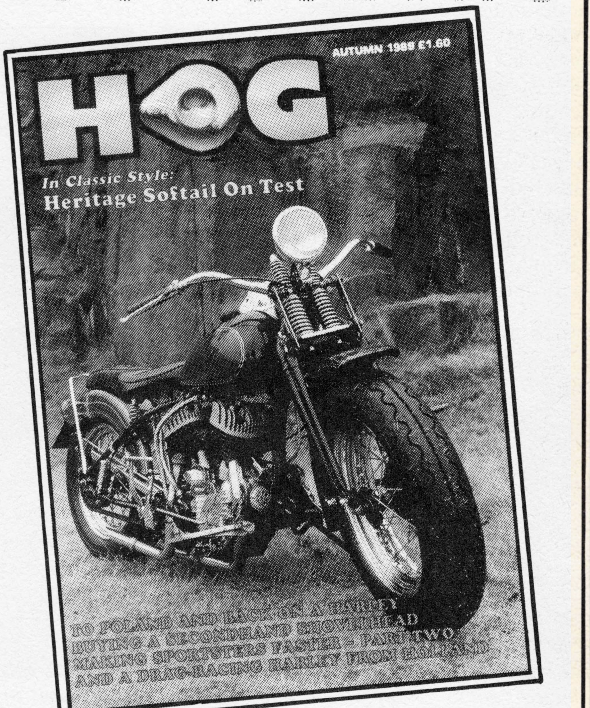
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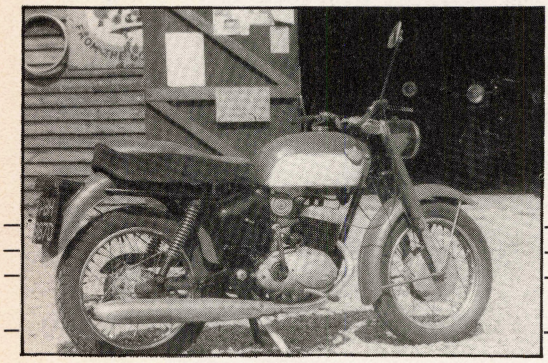
be applied to the side-panels, a home-made flyscreen which unlike the original, bracket-mounted one, obscured half the speedometer, and a gear pedal off a Suzuki.

The latter was due to the absence of the original rear-set gear linkage, and this meant you had to lift your foot off the folding right footrest to reach the pedal and change gear. Since the other footrest is positioned lower, and the rear brake pedal stuck awkwardly close in to the crankcase cover, there's a certain amount of fancy dancing to be done, but in practise this does not prove to be the *real* problem. The folding foot-rest, incidentally, was to help with that awkwardly positioned kickstart, but it's still awkward and sometimes dramatically so, if you kick down, the engine catches and your foot carries on to hit the gear pedal and inadvertantly kick into gear . . . Dave Benson has owned a Sports Superswift and says that with the rearset linkage and the correct low bars, the riding position becomes a racing crouch. But the James, on 18 inch wheels, felt compact and comfortable, and all things considered I did not grieve over the absence of the crouch.

For the real problem with the Sports Superswift was always said to be the handling. Alan acknowledged the probability. His leisurely ride up had yielded no traumas, but there had been a heavy feel to the steering, and the bike had tried to stand upright on tight bends. And the previous week a neighbour had returned from a trial run on the James with the remark that "on roundabouts, you want to get off and walk it round."

The James' cycle parts derived from the AMC 250 single-powered L25 Commodore, which featured a frame with a single top and downtube, bolted to an unusual centre section built up from pressings. The Sports styling was first seen on the conventionally framed Sports Captain 200 single, and then for 1963 came our model, the M25S Sports Superswift. On it the Commodore's pressed-steel mid-section, though retained for the touring M25 Superswift, was replaced on the sportster by tubing. As the AMC empire of which James was a part had contracted, Francis-Barnett had moved into James' factory in Greet, Manchester, and there was a badge-engineered exact Francis-Barnett equivalent of the Sports Superswift, the F.B. Sports Cruiser 91 — not to be confused with their perfectly adequate 2T-engined roadster, the Cruiser 89.



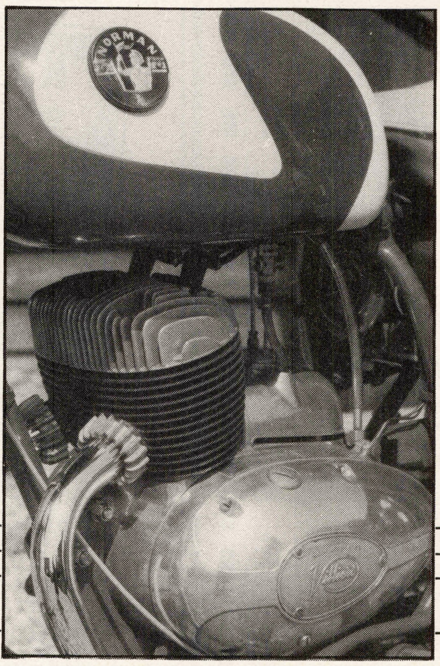
The Enfield's smaller wheels and big tank give it a "chunky" look.

On the evidence of the test ride however, the problem came not from the chassis' back end, which felt secure enough, but at the front end. James' thin front forks, introduced in 1956, may have been adequate for their lightweight commuter two-strokes, but for competition machines had soon been discreetly replaced by AMC four-stroke lightweight or Norton Roadholder front forks. For 1963, the James ones acquired a new upper front fork yoke.

For whatever reason, on the road the forks felt to be in an incorrect relationship with the rest of the chassis, and this gave the sharp end a will of its own. Possibly this was aggravated by defects on these particular teles, as the front end was continually sidling off to the right, it was right bends at any sort of speed that proved maximum tricky. While riding the Norman I had already noticed Alan on the James taking a central line through an S-bend, and I now fully sympathised!

The compensation was that the Sports Superswift's engine, the tuned 2T (it changed to a 4T the following year) buzzed along nicely, markedly livelier than the Norman's, benefitting from its bigger S25 carb, polished ports and higher compression. Alan's machine also had an amazingly responsive quick-action throttle, but although this made the engine very controllable, in one respect it was another problem.

The James' front brake was about the worst I have ever encountered on a motorcycle, and pulling on it inevitably operated the twistgrip a fraction. Due to the quick-action mechanism, this was therefore the only bike I have ever ridden which actually went faster with the brake hard on! Even with care taken to avoid this, you could pull the lever back to the stop at 30 with virtually no retardant effect. The Sports' back brake wasn't much better. Charging towards one of the zig-zag dyke bridges, standing on the awkward brake pedal with the front end preparing to take you into the ditch could be distinctly AAARGH-making.



This version of the 2T engine retains the cowl and small carb which breathe through the gap at the bottom.

Other delights on the James included a hyper-inaccessible centre stand, and a tendency to lay smoke. Come the Green Revolution, in fact, sadly all these machines will be among the first to go to the wall. On a rising throttle the Turbo Twin had been billowing out exhaust gases from the start, but it was while I was overtaking an indecisive Volvo that Alan, following in the car, observed just how shame-makingly terrible his own bike's smoking problem was under acceleration.

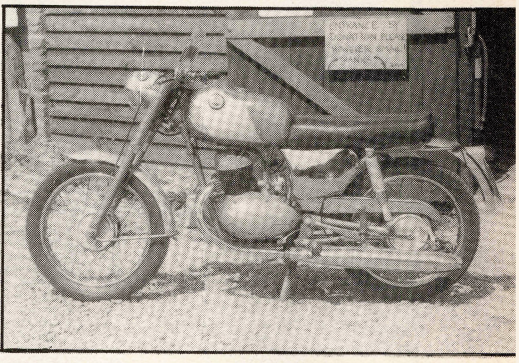
For all that, it was hard to really dislike the James, as its tractable, controllable engine meant that its foibles never really got out of order. But while capable of reasonable progress in the relatively restrained hands of us "mature" (sic) riders, for the original manufacturers to sell this device with its crab-like front end, non-existent brakes and hair-trigger throttle to impatient and inexperienced youngsters must have come close to the criminal. Even if it does look the business.

1966 Royal Enfield Turbo Twin.

The Turbo Twin was the odd man out among the three two-strokes, as it was in roadster trim. It had also been well used by Dave Benson and to some extent looks it, having served as a tourer (Yorkshire, the Isle of Man, rallies in Belgium etc.), and for courier work, in the thirteen years he has owned it, as well as being in the process of a second restoration. Dave is a London-based despatch rider who clocked up a million two wheel miles some time ago.

But though there was also a Turbo Twin Sports, the only differences from this standard model were dropped handlebars, a chromed gold-lined tank and chromed mudguards. Dave was going to get his existing tank chromed but it was judged not fit to take it, so he had settled for repainting it the previous week. The side panels have been done in the same red, though they should be cream.

Otherwise the machine is pretty much correct. The Turbo Twin was essentially a 4T engine dropped in the cycle parts of Royal Enfield's 250 Clipper four-stroke single, itself an economy version of the Crusader. But the Turbo's tool box and lids, the front mudguard with a raised central ridge, the seperate headlamp in place of the Enfield casquette, and the form of the alloy top yoke (today a sought-after item among the Trials boys), all were distinct. All are present and correct on



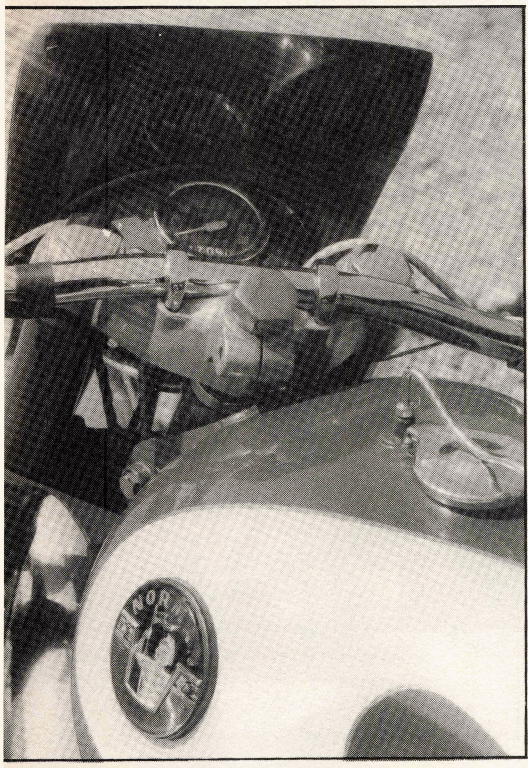
The James Sports Superswift has aggressive styling considering the company's staid image.

Dave's bike, though the machine was a wreck when he got it and some were hard to find. the 4T's correct rectangular air filter had been pirated to go on a James which was then sold, and Dave was concerned that the Vokes item he had substituted might be clogging the Turbo's performance; it had already choked to a halt once during a slow passage of the run. Finally, as with the Norman, the rear units should be the shrouded type; Dave's exposed spring ones are off a Trident!

The Turbo Twin's 4T engine, which is distinguished by a prominent Enfield badge on one side, fits the larger S25 carb and runs an 8.75:1 compression. The result is a quicker and even livelier engine than the James', but from the moment the Enfield's wheels rolled onto the tarmac, the thing that stayed uppermost was the superb steering and handling.

Unfortunately this very favourable impression was masked by the fact that the engine was running lumpily, clogged up for far too long after each gearchange before fitfully clearing itself. Remembering the previous smoking and stalling I pressed on, hoping to clear it out with a good run, as Dave had advised me to do. The 4T, which differed from the 2T in having ported pistons and four transfer ports in place of two, had a reputation for intractability as well as of being more prone to seizure.

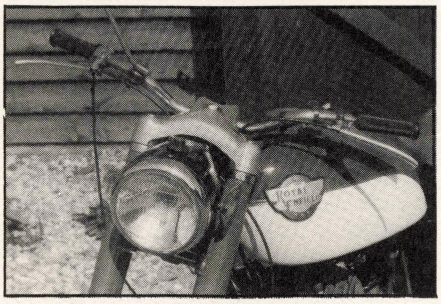
All the while despite the lumpy running the Enfield was steering as if on rails, with sweeping bends and sharp corners taken equally unhesitatingly, effortlessly, and quickly on its 17 inch wheels. Even clogged it managed 50 in third, but then the trouble got worse, with stuttering and ominous backfiring, so I limped back to base. There a smoking rear single-sided rear hub rapidly revealed the problem. The owner had forgotten to tell me that the left footrest was worn and loose on its splines, and if pushed forward by an unwary booted foot, pressed down and operated the brake pedal. The whole ride had been undertaken with the rear brake hard on!

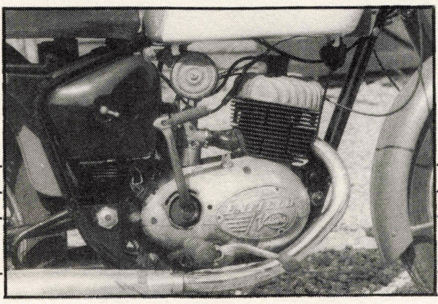

Tank breather and filler cap are nice detail touches and show the quality of finish.

Later, running more or less correctly, the engine, rubber-mounted like all these twins, was as turbine-smooth as the model's name had intended to suggest. Many felt that the two-stroke handled even better than the Clipper, due to its shorter engine's lower centre of gravity, and I can believe this. The only roadholding qualification was a slightly bouncy feeling at the rear when the engine was running rough and the power feed interrupted, which was probably due to rear units set up for 480 lbs of four-stroke!

The engine revved into the 60s and kept up well with the traffic on the Battlesbridge by-pass, though a glance in the mirror while the wick was turned up revealed a twin pall of smoke billowing out behind. The Turbo Twin's standard 6 inch front brake had been famously feeble, but Dave had substituted a 7 inch SLS one off a four-stroke. It promised to have been very efficient, but the cable was sufficiently tired and out of adjustment to mean that by about three-quarters pressure the lever was back on the bars and your last two fingers well trapped!

On the open road I wound the speed up to nearly 70 before traffic intervened. There felt to be some more in hand so I went back to go a second time, but then the engine began to backfire again, so in view of its previous exertions I took it back. In the yard we admired several rider touches such as adjustment of the rear chain by snail cams, and a q.d. rear wheel — indeed to help with rear wheel removal, by simply loosening the nuts on the top of each shock absorber, amazingly the whole sub-frame, seat, rear mudguard, numberplate and rear light all can be lifted away as one undisturbed unit.


Cast alloy top yoke is only found on this model despite other cycle parts being common.

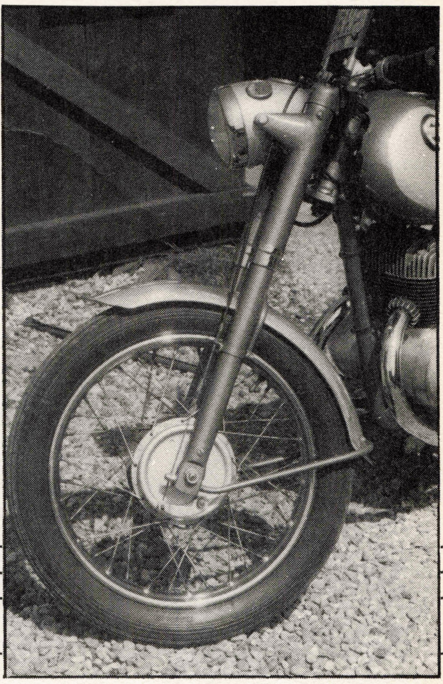

Enfield made their mark on the points cover and ignition switch sits on top of the case.

Summary

Minus points shared by all three bikes were the poor brakes, with the Enfield substitute if properly tuned being the only respectable one. The 6 inch lights too were admitted to be feeble. "Compared to my 98cc James, they're arc lights," Alan offered hopefully, but soon all agreed that at night, "you just have to know where you're going". Finally, though a bit of work with caustic on the silencer internals, plus fine tuning of the two-stroke mixture, *might* modify the picture, there's the smoking. Environment friendly, they ain't.

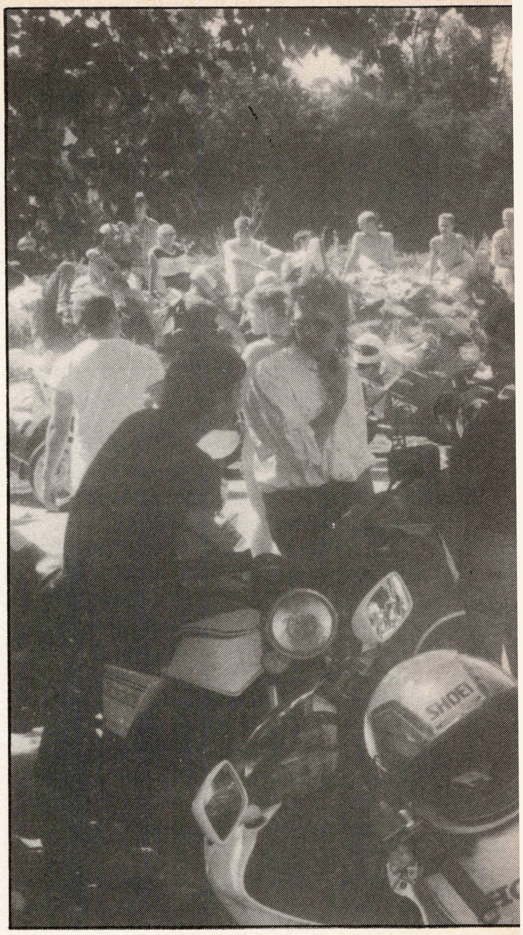
On the plus side, there's economy; with unleaded petrol, anything from 60 to 90 mpg is obtainable — "you have to be going some to get less than 60". There's the Villiers two-stroke simplicity of maintenance and reliability. There's comfort, which hasn't been sacrificed on these sportsters, and lightness, each being around 80 to 100 lbs ligther than equivalent British four-strokes. Those last two facts together make them pleasant and undemanding rides. Finally there's their looks, which in the case of the exuberant Norman and svelte James, stand out well among the majority of the British industry's two-tone attempts to go gay. The looks of the standard Turbo twin may be cobby, but the sports version is a spiffy machine. Heads do turn.

All three were fun to ride, and each in its own way deserves to be cherished. With the James, as with some gurls, good looks conceal and compensate for a lot of bad character. The Norman was civilized and handleable, and with a little work on the engine could be really satisfying. And then there's the nimble Royal Enfield, which even as the economy model it was, had decades of competition breeding going into its open-plan frame, well-sprung front forks and thoughtful rider-friendly touches. Yes, all were fun, but I think I know which one I would want to own.


Forks and front brake are not up to the job, putting the James at the bottom of the handling list

THRILLS AT THE HILL

Rick Kemp checks out the Sunday action at Box Hill



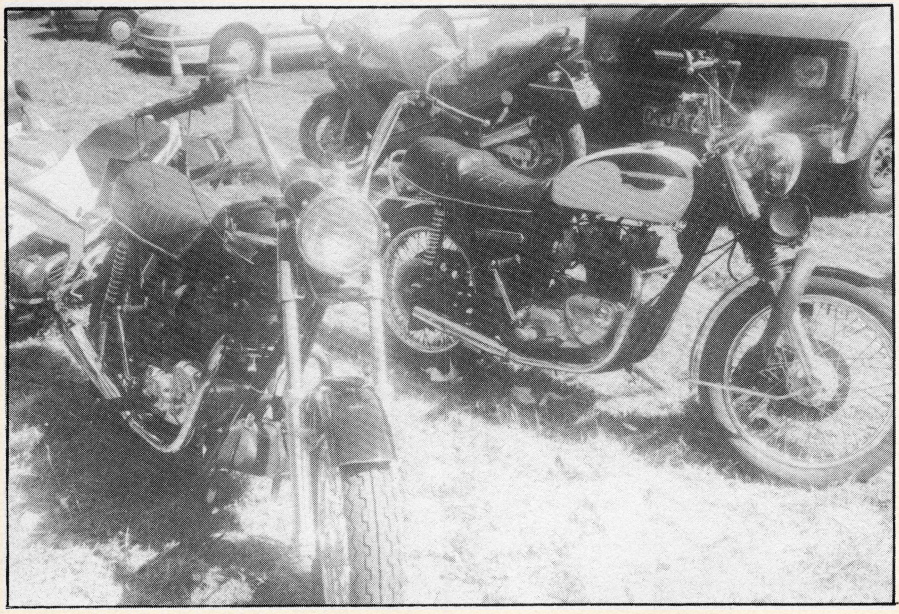
Big crowds in the sunshine

Box Hill's been going for years. I don't mean the Surrey beauty spot itself but as a place where bikers meet. In the early sixties, it was just a lay-by on the A24 where the Pilgrim's Way meets the North Downs Way but Sundays would still find the roadside chocked full of bikes. It could be that this is a spiritual spot, given the meeting of the Ways. Maybe hundreds of years ago the lads from Londinium would take a long weekend and meet up here with their charriots. "Hey Marcus, I like your wheels man, wicked spikes".

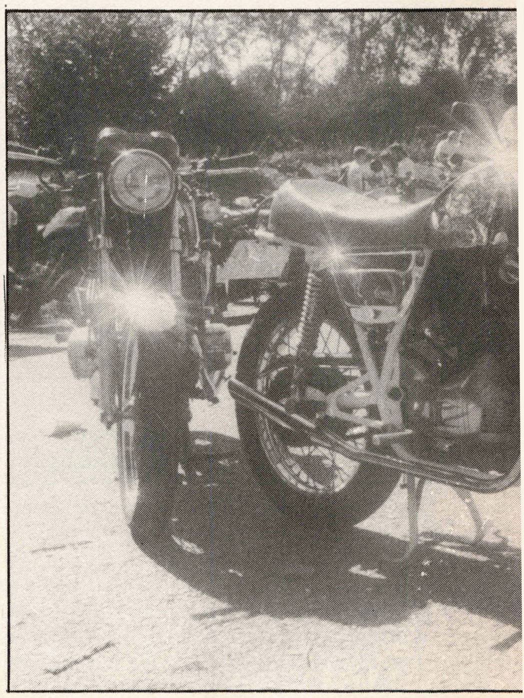
Certainly any time traveller would be hard pressed to recognise the place now. Big tarmac car park and "Big Mac ta" in the smart cafe/picnic/recreation area. Sunday is different though, the car park has a sign as you drive in that says "BIKES" and an arrow. This takes you to another car park which is more like an oval roundabout with a grassy patch in the middle. After lunch is the best time to get there, that's when the place starts to fill up and the activity starts. Activities the day we went along included a heavy metal disco and bar.

You may get a few unsuspecting families stopping for a cuppa but unless they like bikes they don't stay long. Most of the cars belong to bikers without bikes or gurls checking out the boys. By 3.00pm the place is really filling up and you can spot the different factions. Generally people ride in and "do the circuit" then park up where they feel most comfortable, which is usually where there are other bikes like theirs. You get all the Italians in one batch which in the main means Ducatis of every size and shape, one with a polished alloy fairing and seat hump caught my eye. A lone Morini with chrome tank and side panels was looking good in the sunshine. There were a surprising number of Harleys present,

A few Brits still turn out on Sundays



This chromed Morini was a real sparkler



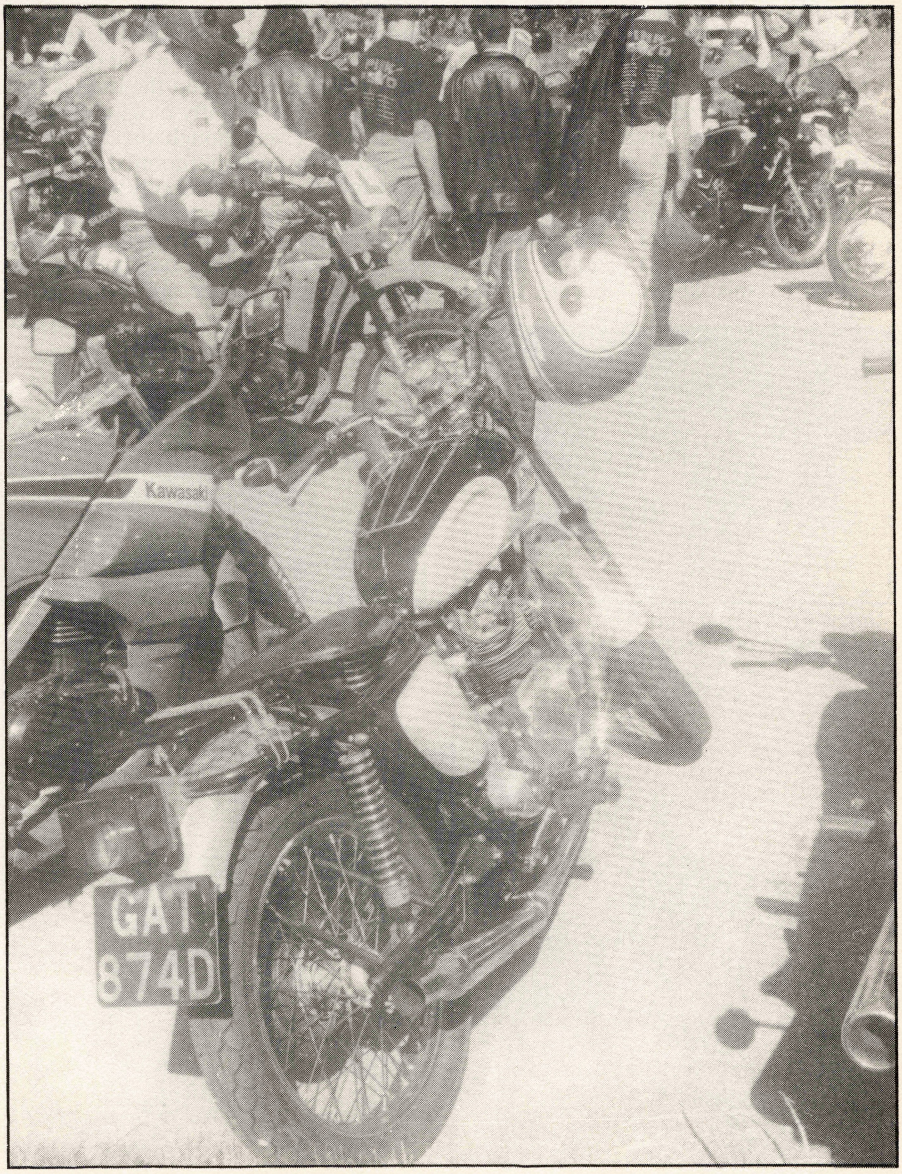
YAMAHA
YAMAHA

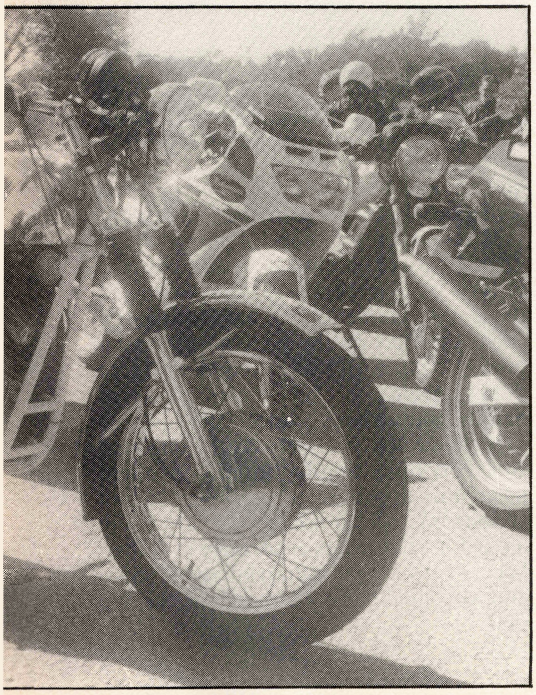
Some people just aren't impressed by all that metal

probably something to do with the value for money that the cheaper ones represent at the moment. But not all of them were new and you had the full cross section of Harley folk, Bad Ass Bro clones to Full Dress Man. The odd old Brit was in evidence, an immaculate Velo parked up for a short while and a Vincent cruised the car park a couple of times probably on its way to the top of the hill.

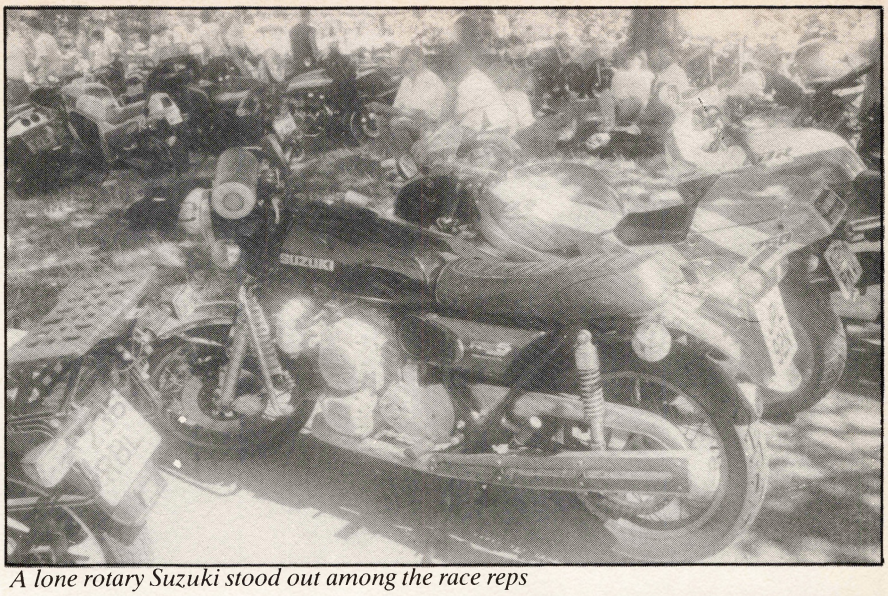
By far the most popular machines at the Hill are Japanese race replicas. About the most you can do with these to personalise them, is a paint job, and there was some pretty fancy paint there, like the GSX-R750 in H-B Suzuki colours, lots of day-glo greens, oranges and pinks, and the amusing sight of GSX-Rs and FZRs painted in pale pastels. Many of the non-

Tasty little Trumpet in yellow and black

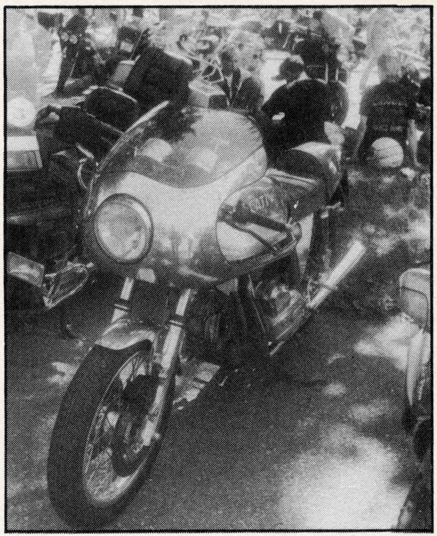




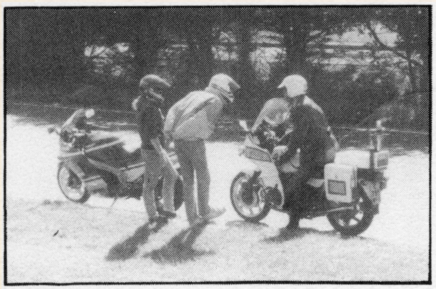
stock bikes also had traces of humour, like the duck tail Kwak with the little yellow duck glued on, like Felix the Katana that looked almost normal 'till you got up close.

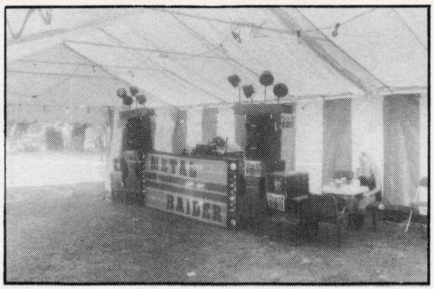

A lone rotary Suzuki stood out among the race reps

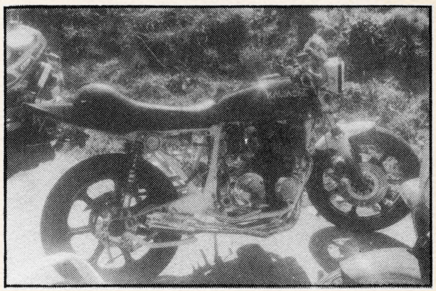
Come mid-afternoon things began to hot up on the road. The A24 is a dual carriageway, the Box Hill section has a roundabout at either end with some fairly tasty bends inbetween. Up one side and back down the other is the usual game. As this is the main London to Worthing road, the afternoon has its fair share of traffic returning from the coast to make things more interesting. We are talking some seriously quick bikes here and pit boards with times on, held out to the riders. Initially, I thought what are these guys doing? Then I remembered what I used to do; race from the cafe up the road round the roundabout and back to the cafe again, against the clock just to see if drilling out that rear brake lever had made it any faster. The difference was, in those days the "ton" was magic not only for its three figures but for the fact that even a tunes 650 would have trouble staying above it for any length of time and cornering at those speeds was a white knuckle affair. These days, an equivalent speed would have to be 150mph and then of course there wsn't the traffic in them days blah! blah! blah! Also the Sunday meet at Box Hill has the added spice that the local Bill are trying very hard to catch and prosecute people for any traffic offence and speeding in particular. This part of Surrey is very expensive Home Counties territory and "One simply doesn't want a lot of Herberts racing motorbikes on the roads close to one's estate, does one?" Of late, the numbers of people being charged with different offences is about 150 per week, presumably this keeps Dorking Court busy. Apart from some spirited riding the only piece of blatant antagonism we witnessed was the gent on the old Yam XT500 who kept it on the back wheel 'till he went out of sight. Each time the biking Bill passed by they got a good natured cheer from the assembled crowd.

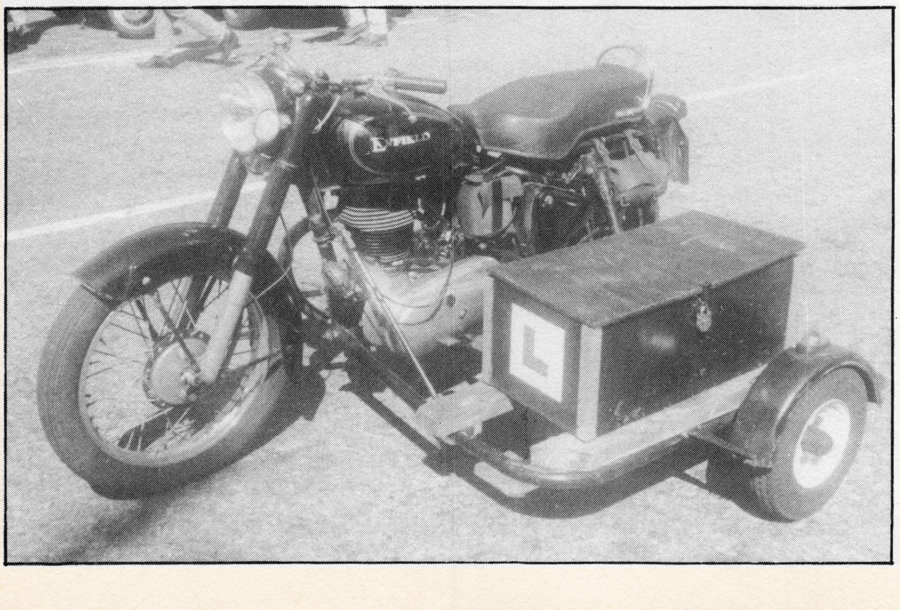

Acres of polished alloy on this Duke

The facilities available, food, drink and disco give Box Hill an almost organised feel, but that's the eighties for you, if there's a need, someone will fulfil it. Toilets are provided but if you do get the call I would recommend the bushes first, there are some very iffy blokes lurking in the Gents! Even though the Disco had started up by mid-afternoon, it was really more mood music as nobody was actually dancing, just sitting around drinking beer out of plastic glasses. Now that's a funny thing because if selling beer is legit then presumably the police are aware that a licence has been given but they're still trying to stop bikers drinking and driving.


"Just a word about your riding sir"


The disco tent took some time to get going


Another variation on the Kawasaki theme


Haven't seen something like this for ages

If it's sheer numbers of bikes you're after the Box Hill must be hard to beat. If girls on bikes appeal then there are lots of those too. Some riders have obviously spent fortunes on the latest tackle and a paint job but with a few exceptions, there didn't seem to be much personal handiwork about and the whole experience left me with the feeling that Box Hill on a Sunday afternoon might have more appeal for a sociologist than a serious biker. That apart, it's worth going along for a few hours every once in a while because it's a highly charged atmosphere and you might just be there for the big one . . .

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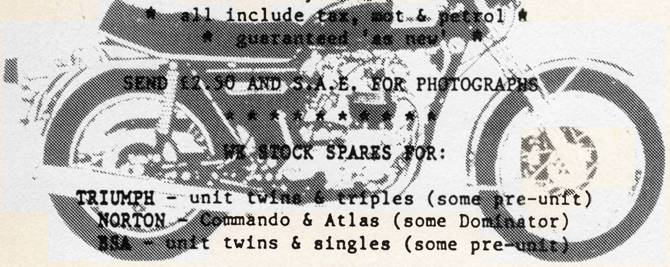

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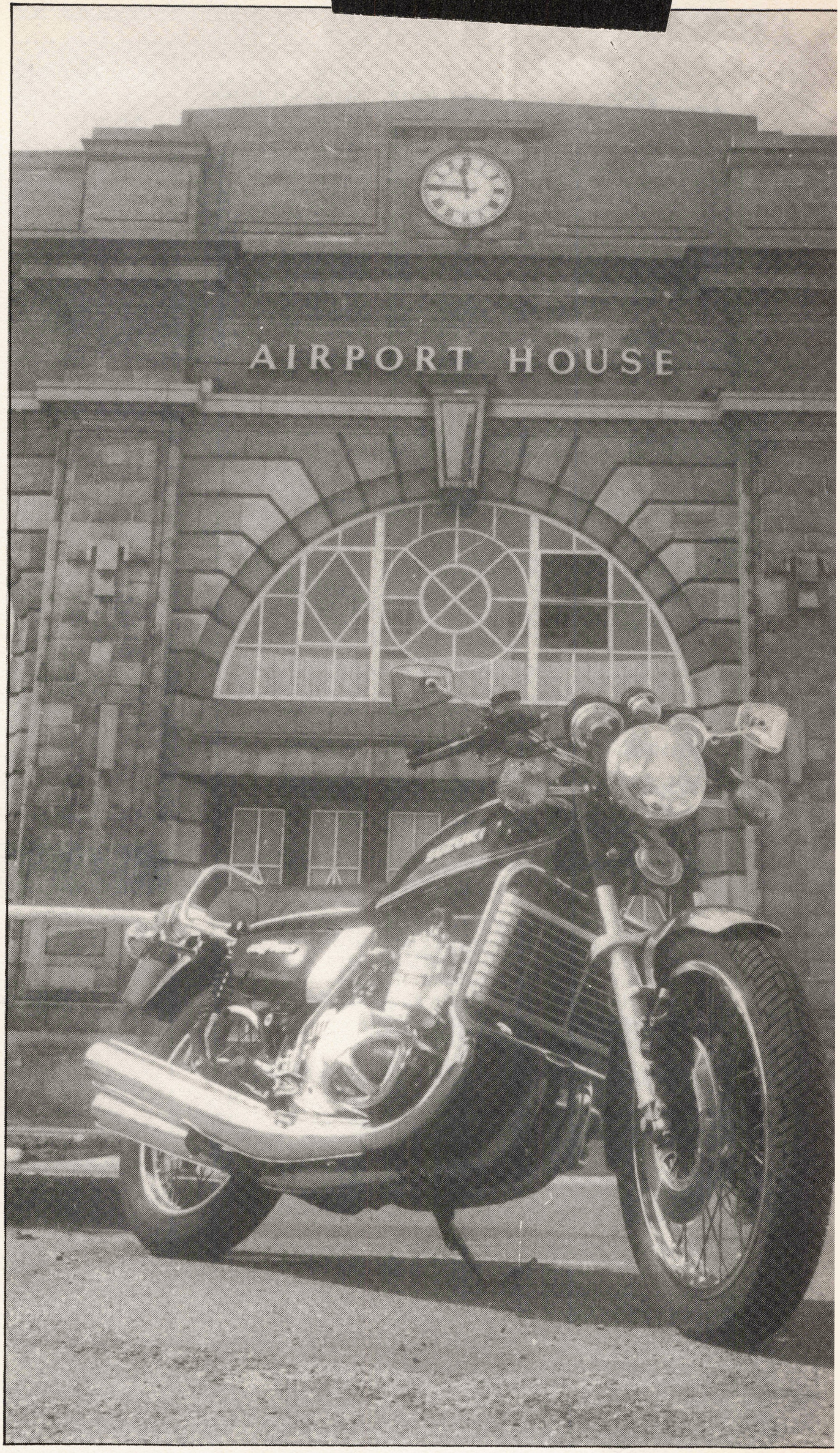
RICK KEMP MEETS A MAN ON THE BOIL



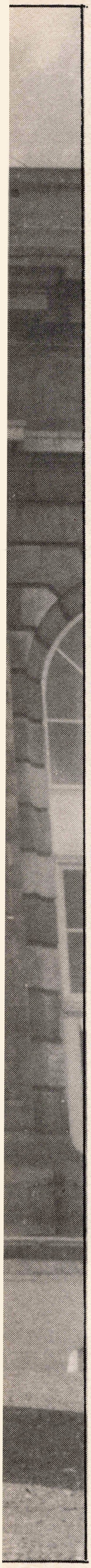
Still looking good after all these years ►

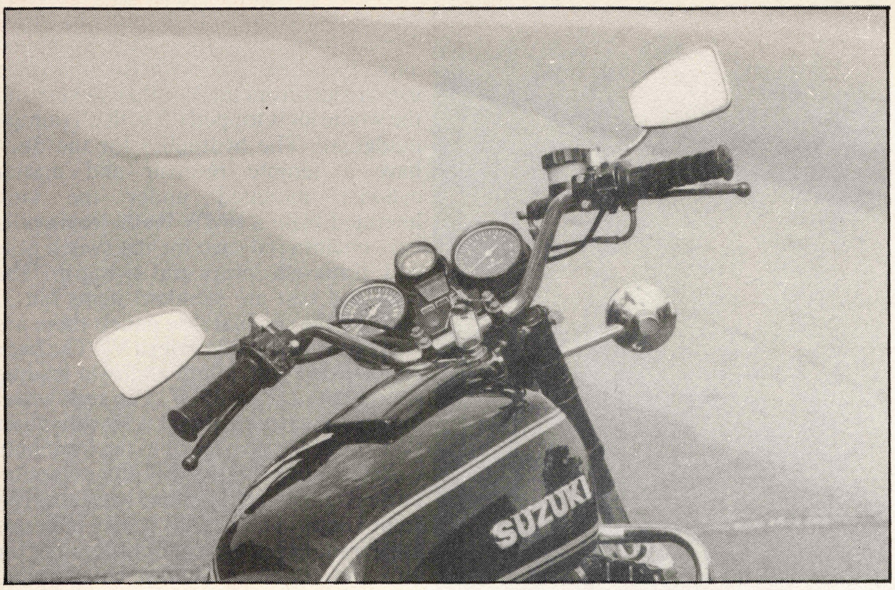
I don't know if you've noticed lately but one of the things that the sun's brought our are the fair weather bikes. The sort of bikes that only get ridden in fine weather and usually on limited mileage "classic" insurance policies; I'll bet a lot of speedo cables were disconnected this summer! Anyway one of the bikes that was starting to reappear in obviously restored form was Suzuki's old kettle, the GT 750. Remember those colours of the early '70s, metallic turquoise and metallic pink?

Stephen Osborn always wanted a GT 750 when he was a lad but couldn't afford one and so settled for another two stroke triple, Kawasaki's little KH250. Now that he's older, wiser and richer he rides an FZ750 Yamaha as fairly regular transport. But quite recently he was passing A Touch of Classic in Croyden and in the back of the shop he spied a slightly neglected black GT750. That was it, it may have been 15 years too late but at last he could be the owner of a GT750, a deal was done, hands were slapped and the bike was his.

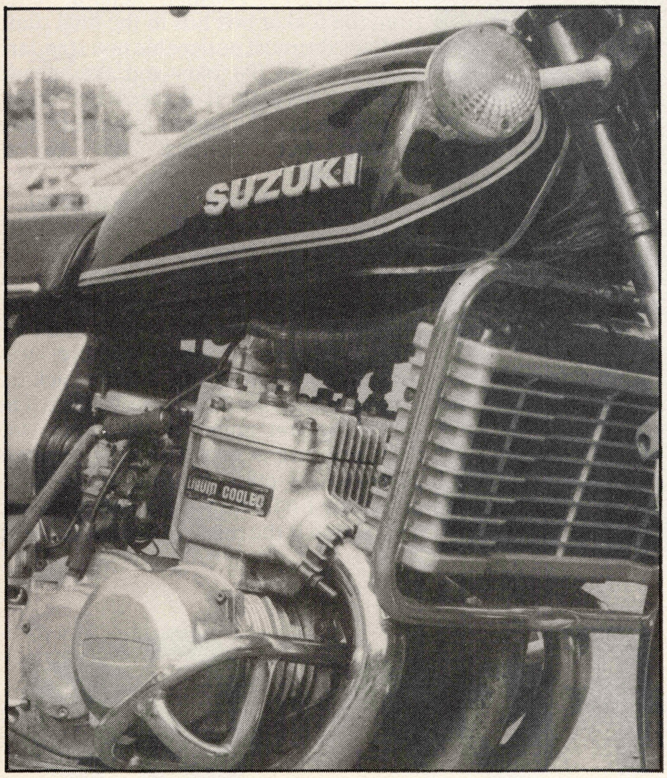
Now, the GT750 was never the world's best handling bike and its previous owner had obviously taken this into account. Steps taken to try and assist its surefootedness were, the fitting of a fork

Fork brace was a de rigueur period bolt-on goodie

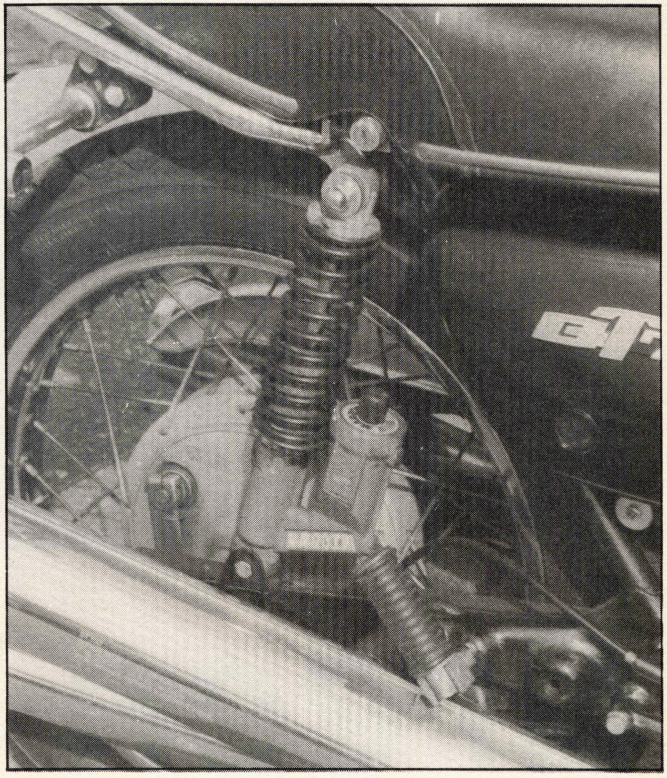




Temperature gauge and gearselector indicator were novel in their day ◄



They don't make radiators like that any more



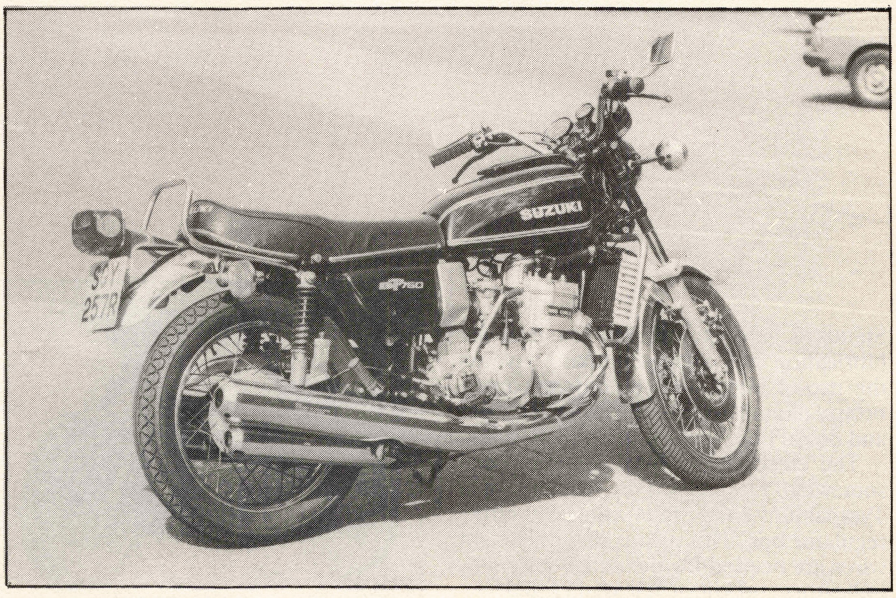
Aftermarket swingarm and shocks help the Suzuki's handling ▼

brace, rectangular swingarm and Marzocchi rear shocks. Apart from these mods, different bars and mirrors are the only changes. Mechanically the motor seemed sound, one exhaust stud had gone walkies which meant that the right hand pipe was blowing a bit but nothing serious.

Generally the paint and cycle parts looked a bit tired. But this doesn't bother Stephen because he wants a GT750 like the one he couldn't afford years ago, so he's going to put it back to standard.

Despite its somewhat dated design, the old kettle is still fun to ride. Big two strokes perform in a respectable manner particularly on acceleration. It's a comfortable bike to ride having a smooth engine and good riding position. Even a liquid cooled two stroke triple has a weight advantage over a four stroke four of comparable performance. It might be big but it doesn't feel as heavy as some of the early '70's dinosaurs. In the years to come you won't find too many GT750s rotting at the bottom of gardens.

Three into four exhaust produces a pleasing howl ►



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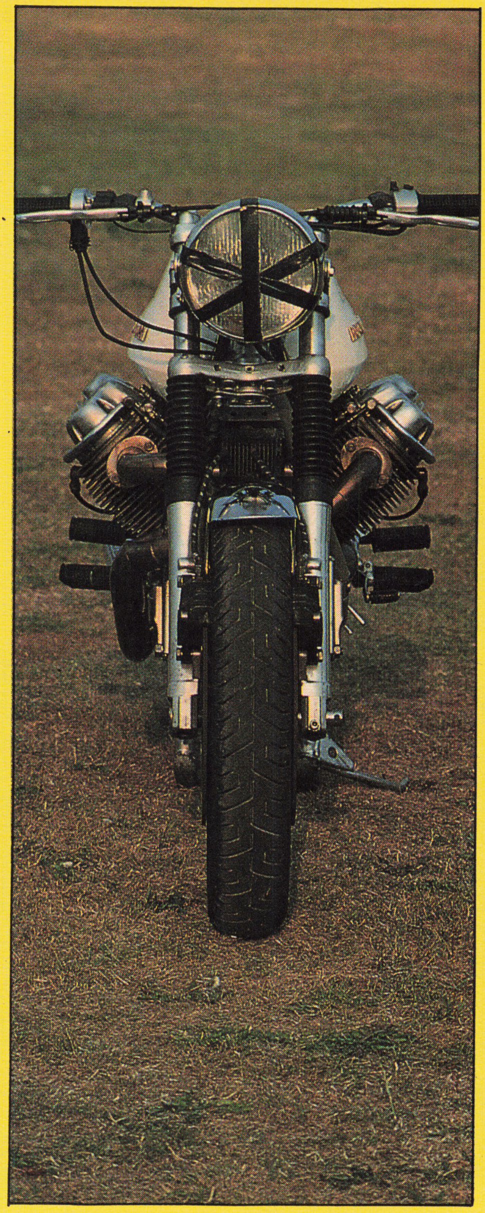
Green For Go

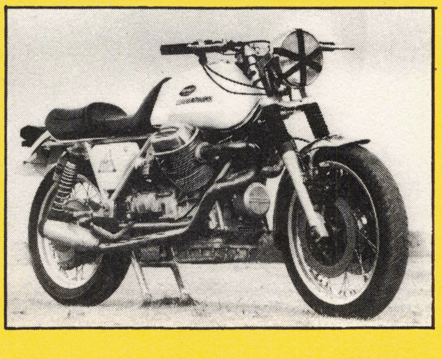
A new lease of life for Guzzis and environmentally sound into the bargain, Rick Kemp takes a ride . . .

This particular Moto Guzzi started life as 1987 LeMans. Its owner, Martin Harvey just happens to own Guzzi Overland and has used the bike as a sort of product testbed for some years. It would be quite easy for this type of machine to look a complete mess due to the fact that it's being changed all the time with different bits being bolted on. But of late, the bike has reached its peak as far as the owner is concerned.

About the only original items left are the gearbox internals. Until recently the frame had lasted the course but Martin threw it up the road in a major way and a new frame had to be found. The motor has had the standard Overland tune and now produces a beefy 74.3hp. The tuning process involves big bohne, gas flowing the cylinder heads, a different camshaft, replacing the timing chain with gears and using the Dr John stainless steel two-into-one exhaust system. The advantage of gears is that they make both the valve and ignition timing more accurate and of course they don't need any adjustment. In keeping with the current trend, this motor also runs unleaded. To achieve this, the old soft cast iron valve seats are replaced by supertrick ones containing stuff like nickel, chrome, molybdenum and vanadium. Before you all rush for the hacksaw and chemistry set, once you've got the valve seats pressed in, you'll need a very expensive bit of tackle for grinding the angles something to do with high speed rotating concentric stones. Used in conjunction with stainless steel valves, the seats and valves no longer try and weld themselves together in the absence of lead. With combustion chamber temperatures reaching beyond the 1300 F degree mark and the valves banging shut at around 62 times every second at maximum revs, welding is the usual consequence when lead is removed from the fuel. Standard valve guides rely on lead for lubrication but current thinking favours the use of high silicone content copper bronze alloy. This material is much harder and doesn't need constant lubrication.



The electrics on this bike have been somewhat rationalised by the use of a Tympanium solid state voltage control/regulator box. This means that only eight wires are needed for the entire system as indicators and kill switch aren't fitted.

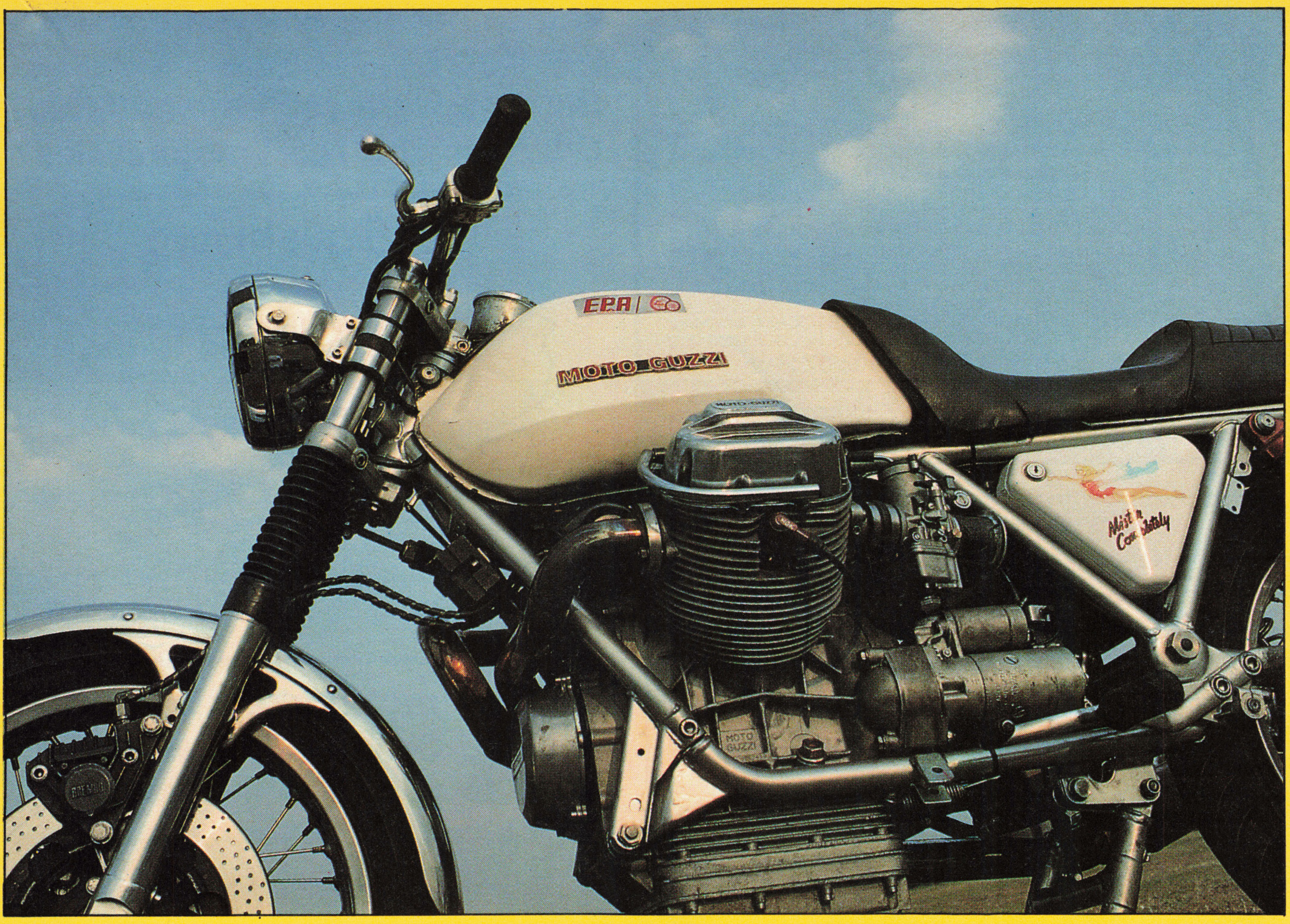


Even though this bike looks as though it could be a slightly personalised factory item it's far from it. The front end uses a 38mm Marzocchi fork with a spoked alloy T3 wheel. The twin Brembo discs use carriers from the V1000 Convert and the whole lot is topped off with a Triumph mudguard. The hydraulics for the discs have a remote resevoir and master cylinder mounted under the tank liberated from a BMW R90S leaving the bars uncluttered save for the switch gear and Tomaselli levers and twistgrip. The tank and seat are standard items but in place of the original side panels there are tool boxes either side from a V7. The back end is fitted with a hub and twin leading shoe brake off an 850T. The rear wheel matches the front but uses a 3in rim rather than the 2½ in item laced to the front hub.

Because everything with the exception of the Ducati headlight has been sourced from Guzzi, the bike has a very cohesive appearance even the bright white paint for tank and side boxes could've been applied to an early T3. Polished metal abounds from the rocker box lids to the final shaft. Perhaps the most noticeable non standard items are the flat bars and the speedo which nestles in the tank recess behind the steering head. The lack of indicators does nothing but enhance the overall appearance.

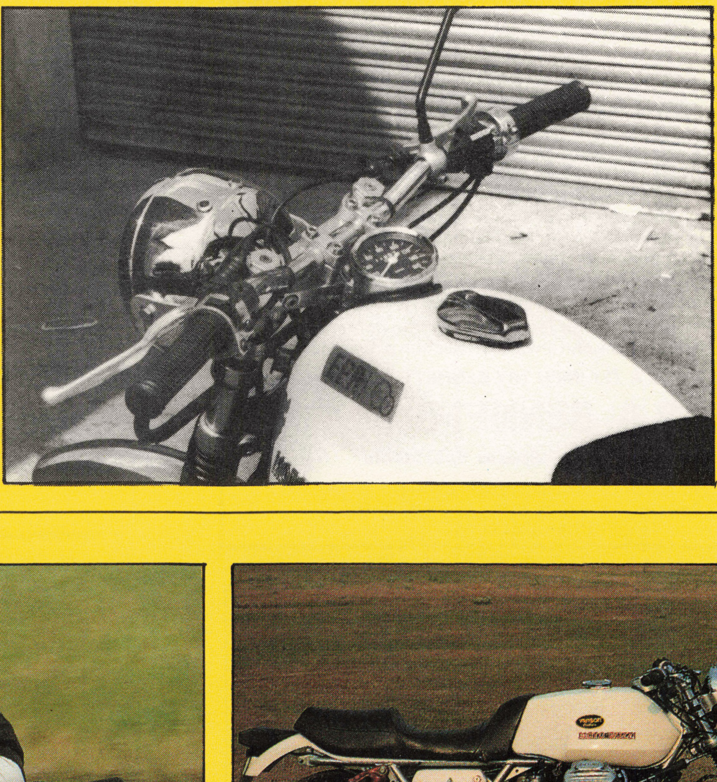
No signs of altered internals are evident on starting, the usual flick up Dell Orto chokes on the 40mm carbs need to be used from cold and then it's away on the button. Martin has disconnected the pumps on the carbs and says he can't tell the difference. Certainly there was nothing wrong with the throttle pick up and not a hint of a flat spot anywhere. The first thing you notice is the clutch, the lever pressure is strong and the action is sharp so it's quite possible to stall the motor the first time you try and move off. This action is the result of the Swiss clutch fitted, made by TransKontinental, it consists of a single plate diaphragm with lightweight ring gear and is 7lb lighter than the Guzzi item.

Once you've got the hang of feeding the clutch in, the lack of flywheel effect transforms the normally lazy gearchange. In fact, the lack of inertia is so pronounced that you're better off not using the clutch for up changes. This is a pretty alien experience for most Guzzi

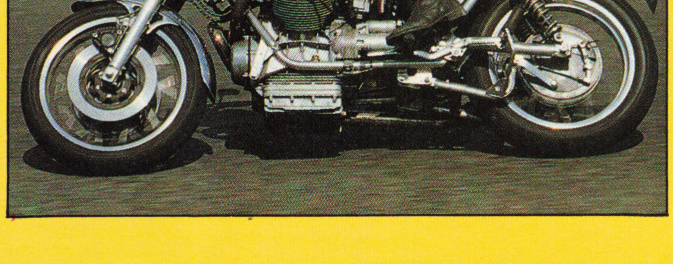


owners to say the least! It doesn't obviously affect the lever travel which is on the long side but changes can be very quick because the revs drop faster when you shut the throttle. The lack of flywheel also makes itself felt on acceleration particularly in top gear when overtaking, there's no need to slip down a cog, no doubt the extra power has something to do with it too.

The motor on this bike feels smoother than I remember standard Guzzis being and also the torque reaction is reduced to a point where it no longer has to be taken into consideration. Just sitting on the bike in neutral and revving it doesn't produce a big cant to one side. Likewise, changing



Speedo is mounted at the front of the tank.



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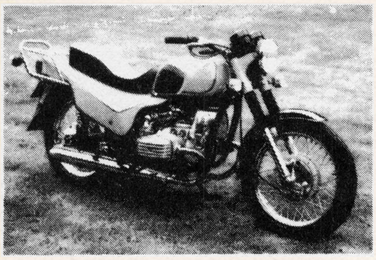

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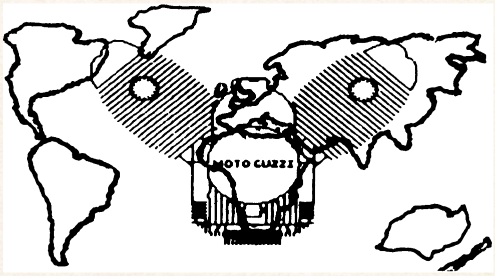

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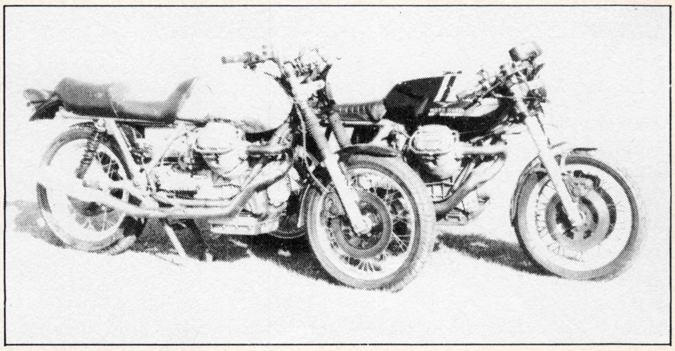

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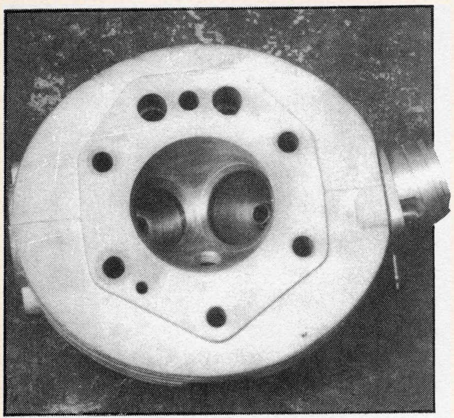
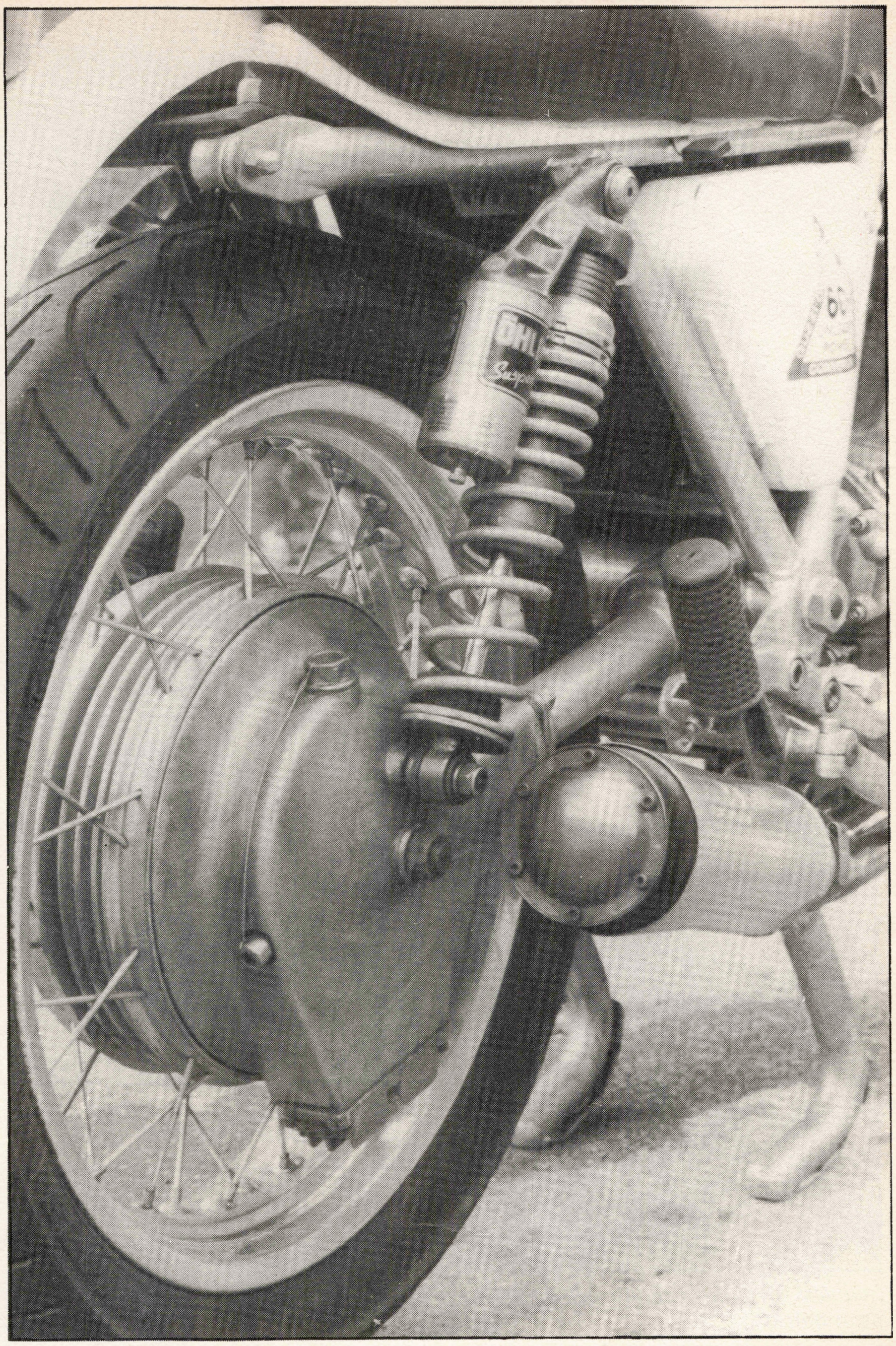
down for corners doesn't have to be the usual premeditated exercise even if you've got the bike cranked over.

Being fairly used to Guzzis, the first time I went for the brakes it was with a heavy right foot — not much happened, then I remembered I was not riding a bike with linked brakes. Never mind, the two large Brembos at the front end did their job very well. The master cylinder to caliper ratio makes for strong sensitive stoppers, it's not a one finger job unless you normally practice squeezing golf balls. The rear brake continued to be ineffectual but Martin said he deliberately keeps it that way because it can be rather sharp if adjusted up. Given that all the braking happens at the front, the fork didn't dive too much and came back up as soon as the brake was let off. Suspension at the other end is handled by twin Ohlins with piggyback resevoirs. These units seem well suited to the Guzzi, giving a firm but comfortable result with the standard hard units.

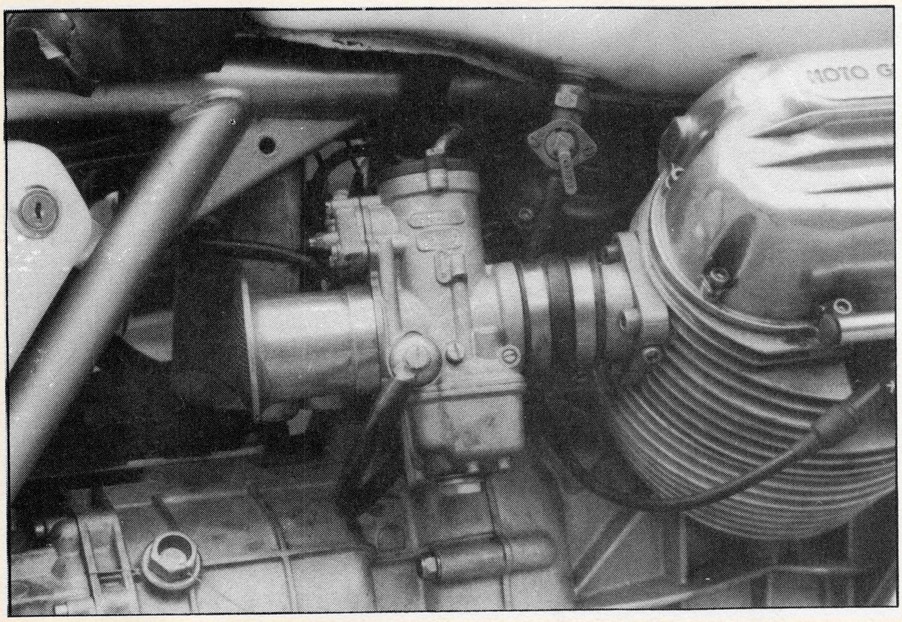


Gas-flowed heads are available as exchange items.

Open road performance is impressive, you can crack the throttle open at any revs and the bike just leaps forward even if you load it up in a high gear. Yes, it does pink if you try and make it, but then so does a standard motor. Even fitted with a sump extension there's ample ground clearance and the exhaust is tucked right out of the way for more cornering confidence.

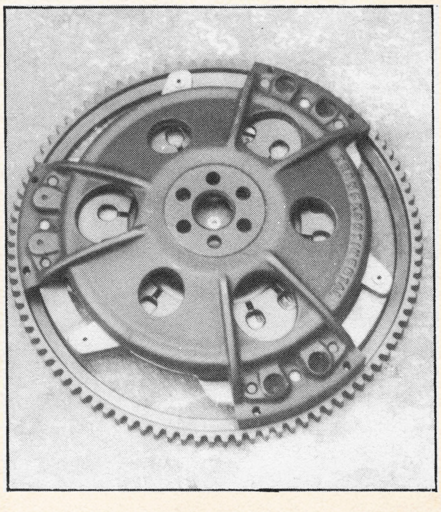


Remote reservoir Ohlins shocks are well suited to the Guzzi.

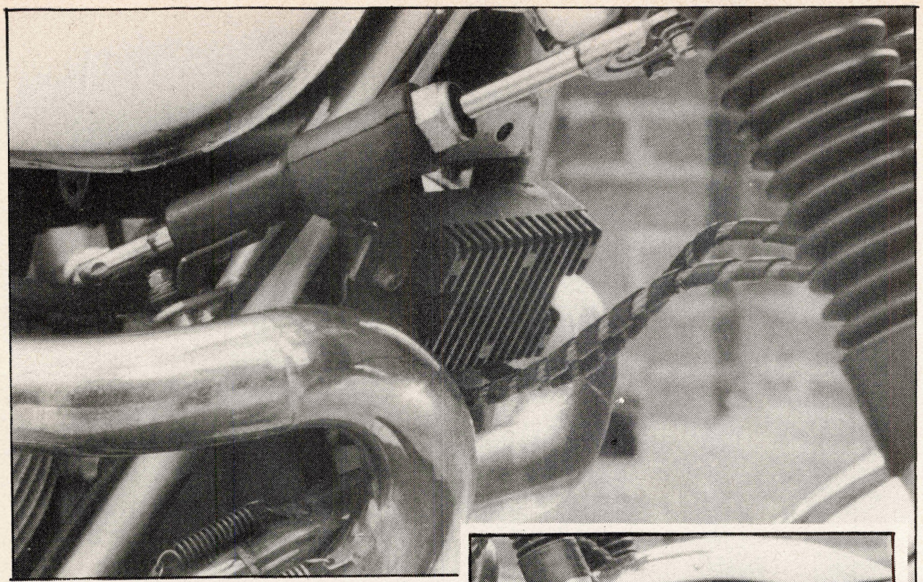


Del Orto 40mm carbs are fitted with bellmouths but have the pumps disconnected.

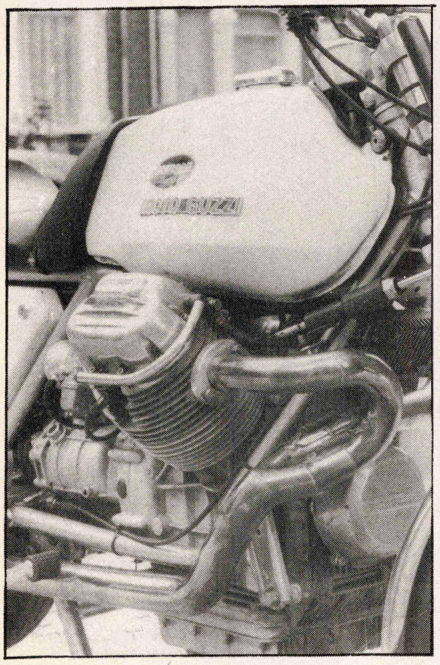
Super lightweight Swiss made clutch makes an impressive contribution.



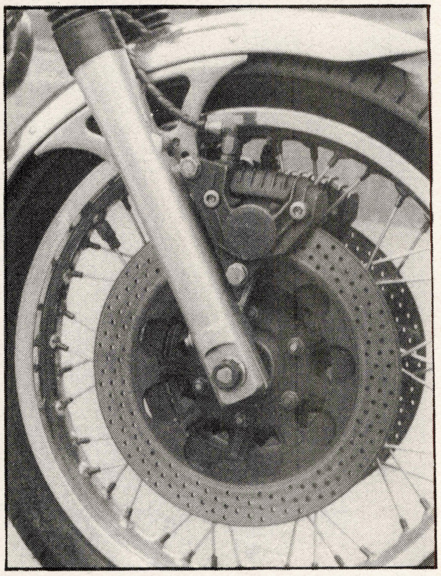
Green For Go



Solid state black box replaces regulator and voltage control.



Stainless Dr John exhaust get the gasses away quickly.

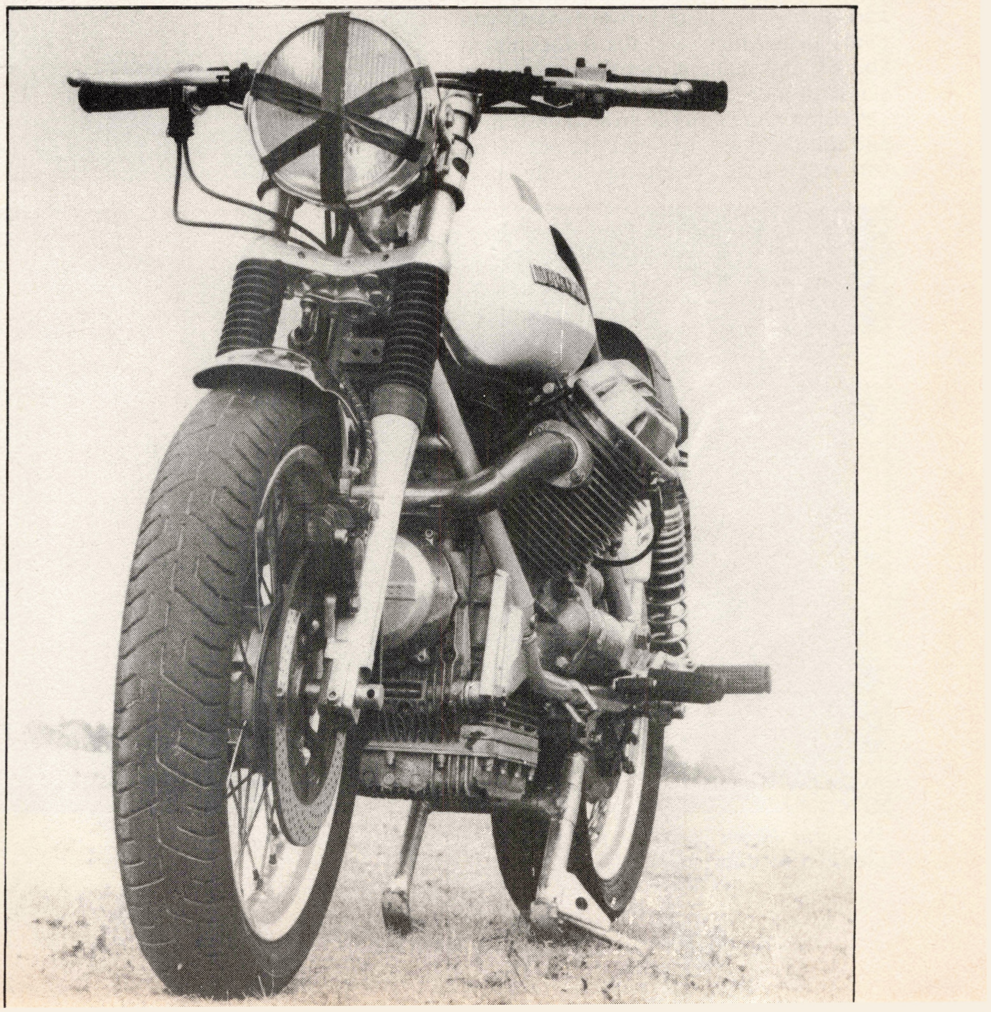


Twin Brembo discs use Convert carriers, hydraulics come from BMW.

Personally, I found the bars a little too wide and straight, I could've done with the grips pulled back some. Even so the riding position is easy and there's enough leverage on the bars for wrestling with the urban traffic. The first few bends I tried hustling the bike through gave me the impression that it wanted to run straight, having to heave it over on the apex. After a while shifting body weight rather than handlebar proved the smoothest technique. Also it prefered to be driven round corners rather than entering on a trailing throttle. I imagine on a race track where where you know the bends and can hold the right line this bike would be very quick, but on A roads with traffic I treated it with respect. The sticky compound Avon tyres obviously helped in the twisty bits and the steering damper ensured a lack of head shaking under heavy throttle.

Initially I had expected the bike to be something of a handful under normal riding conditions. But as is often the case with properly sorted vehicles, they seem relatively docile. Any peaky power characteristics that the sports camshaft may be tempted to produce is tempered by the extra capacity. In fact the increase in torque for this tuned engine is just short of 50 per cent, giving more of what a Guzzi's for in terms of flexibility. If it's adrenalin you're after then the extra horses in this motor will push you along at over 130mph on unleaded fuel and with a street legal exhaust note. This is basically what Guzzi Overland set out to do with the standard lump and they have achieved it. The performance boost turns the bike into what many people thought the LeMans should've been but never was but at the same time it's still within the chassis' capability and therefore acceptable safety limits.

It's an impressive machine with the possible exception of the rear brake but that's there as much for aesthetic reasons as anything. Guzzi Overland will build you virtually anything you want using any combination of cycle parts. The full engine conversion as in the bike tested doesn't come cheap with the clutch alone costing over £500 and exchange cylinder heads at £400. But until the end of the year they're offering a special deal which includes reconditioning the gearbox for £2345.00. It's a lot of money but if you like Guzzis you'll love the results!



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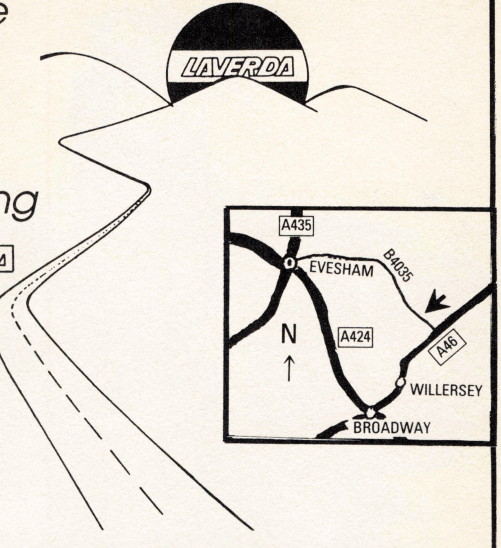

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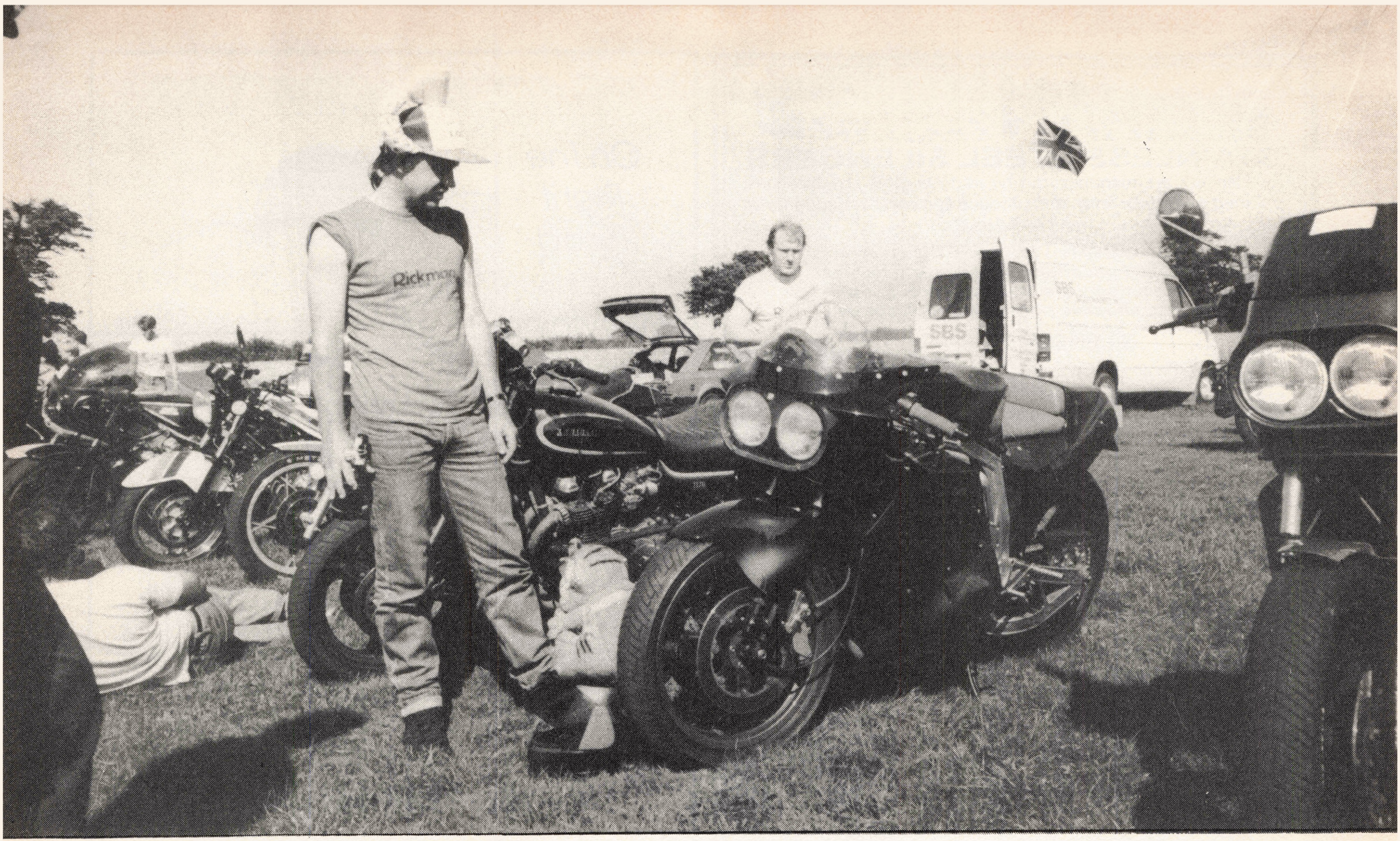


The first Specials Rally went off without a hitch.

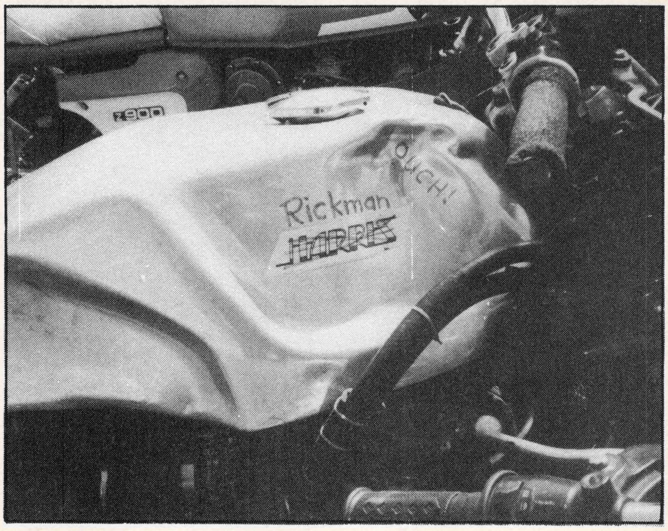
SOMETHING SPECIAL

Mike Clay finds some fancy tube work at the Specials Rally . . .

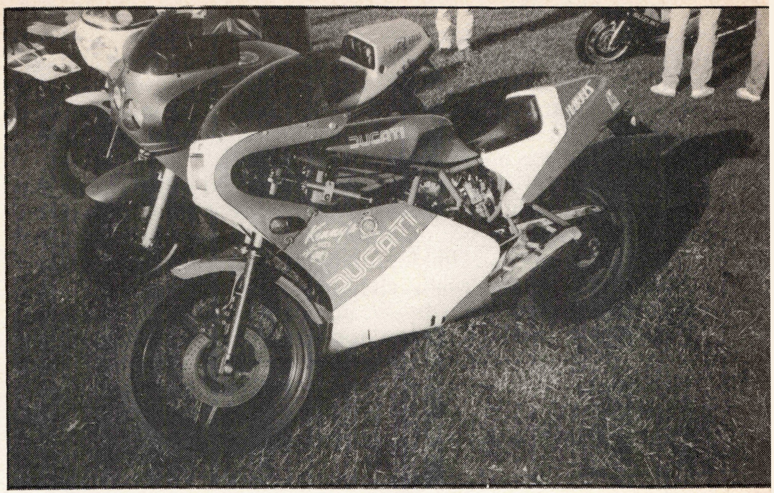
This summer with its incredible weather was surely made for motorcycling in general and rallying in particular, so I was only too happy to pack my tent onto the Ducati and head north to the First Specials Rally, organised jointly by the Harris and Rickman owners clubs at Market Bosworth in Leicestershire.

The event was run over the three days in July and kicked off with a days's speed testing over a twisty sprint course at Bruntingthorpe. Some riders only turned up for this bash while others like me took a raincheck prefering the more relaxed mood of pure rallying. Reaction to Bruntingthorpe was a trifle mixed with some dissatisfaction at the over-long run-in and decidedly short braking strip. One unfortunate Spondon owner had the misfortune to slide on a corner then high-side it at an estimated 80 per. The laid-back set-up meant that there were no medical or first aid facilities on hand and riders were allowed out wearing whatever they chose. Under those circumstances the crashed rider might consider himself lucky to have got away with a written-off bike and a flayed bum! Bruntingthorpe had been financed and organised by another magazine and on Sunday, although grateful for their generosity, there was talk of the clubs hiring Mallory out of their own pockets next year.

But, you might ask, what was I doing at a specials rally on a nearly bog-standard Ducati? Well, my interest in specials dates back to the time when all of creation was chuntering around on Tritons and the way to be really different was to cruise on a standard Triumph or Norton. My first attempt was a radical 125 Bantam which was followed by a 500 Goldie-engined Norton. Later I bought a 650 Triton, and assembled several other oddball machines. The current project is a 'Honcati'. This involves finagling a Honda CB50J unit into the remains of a sixties Sport 48 Ducati, a rather obscure model which was chiefly characterised by weighing half of nothing and wearing a lovely little mini-jelly mould tank. It was rather badly let down by the glorified moped engine that "powered" it however; a three-speed, two-stroke with twistgrip gearchange whose only saving grace was an outrageously downdraughted Dell'Orto carburettor.



If in doubt . . .



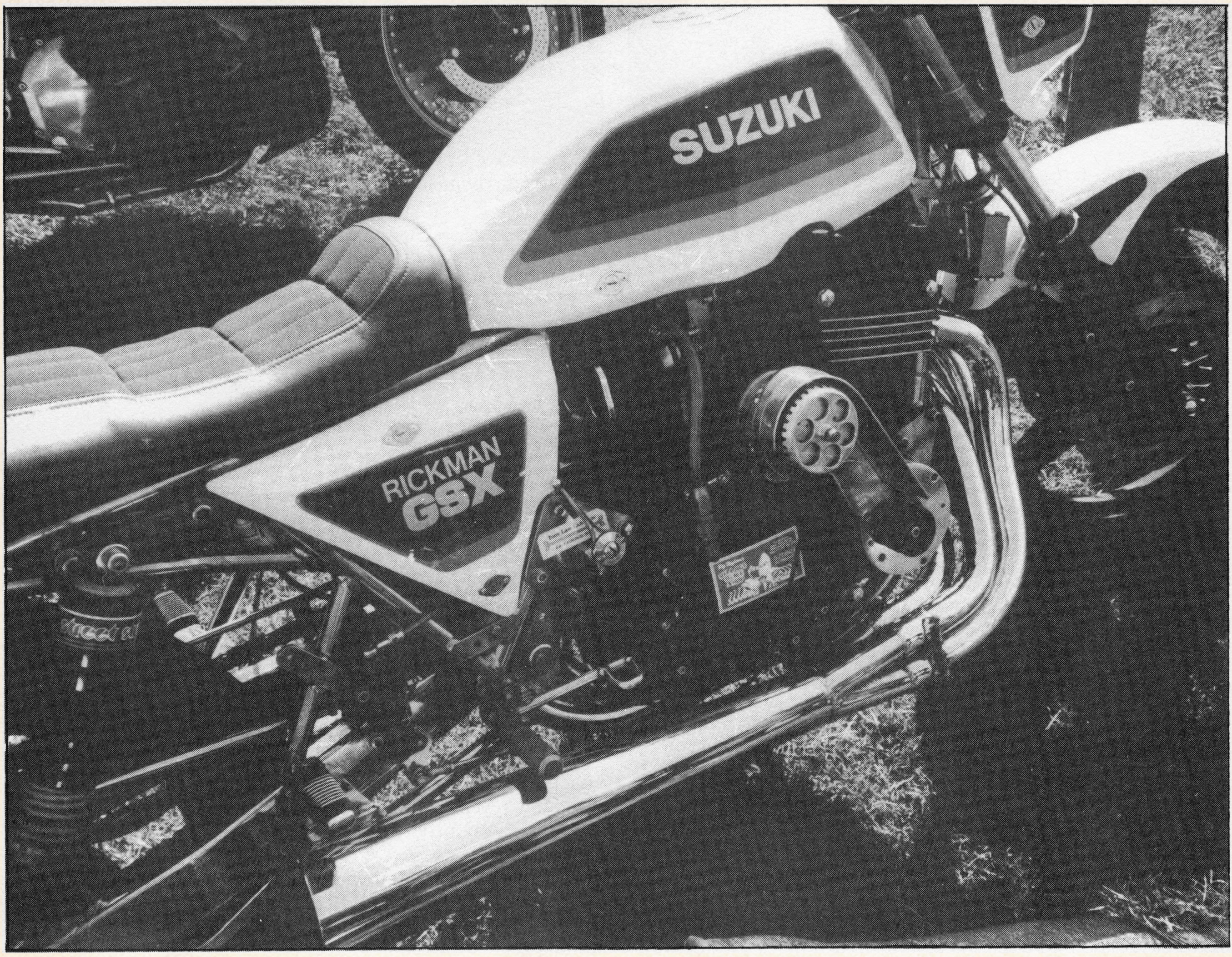
European engined bikes had their own category.

The Specials Rally really centred around the concours and although there were plenty of different classes, the main requirement seemed to be that engine and frame should have come from different manufacturers. In practice this meant classes for Harris, for Rickman, for Euro-engined and of course for an overall supreme class. There was also an open Brit-bike class that in the absence of any Tritons, went to a Commando.

Harrises were the most popular machines present, carrying just about every four cylinder Jap engine imaginable. A good number of older Rickmans, usually with the odd single-cam Honda lump sitting in the tubes made up the rest of the bulk of those present. Exceptions included a couple of lovely Moto Martin CBX sixes either of which would have had my vote for the machine I would most like to have taken home with me. There were a handful of continental visitors including one guy on a Nico Bakker-framed creation whose motive power failed to register, either in my mind or my note book! To break the four-cylinder monotony, Mark Eaton turned up with a very business-like Harris Ducati. Although only 600cc I'd back it on a twisty road against anything else there — but then I'm biased!

Despite the odd turbocharger lurking, the powerplant that I coveted most belonged to a drag bike, Suzuki powered and sporting a nice line in superhargers. The owners of this little bolide also provided considerable entertainment by bringing along a resurrected Honda monkey bike. Blasts round the field were on offer to all and sundry and I made sure that I got my turn. I have to confess to nearly dropping the ridiculous little thing as a gentle handful of front anchor locked the wheel and demonstarated the advantage of having some drive. (The monkey bike is totally devoid of suspension — the ultimate in anti-dive.)

This Rickman held a supercharged GSX 1100 motor.



Late Saturday afternoon a car and box trailer rolled onto the rally site (Market Bosworth rugby club ground, complete with own bar folks!) and an individual with one leg in plaster literally hopped out. Ian King was obviously well known to the assembled masses, and indeed several of his previous machines have been extensively portrayed in the press. Despite considerable blandishments Ian refused to open the trailer on Saturday night, but nonetheless the universal reaction to his arrival was: "I wonder who will get overall runner-up?"

Sunday morning showed this to be no less than a realistic attitude as Ian wheeled his latest *eouvre* into the light of day. Completed only the previous day, this piece of wickedness centres on a turbocharged GSX-R 1100 with water injection and an air-shifter.

As the air-shift might suggest Ian has built the machine very much with drag racing, and the ultimate streetbike competition, in mind, though it is still sufficiently street-legal and practical for the odd weekend jaunt. The aluminium box-section frame was built by Harris to Ian's specification and incorporates a trick single-sided swing arm which also serves as resevoir for the air-shift. White Power upside down forks suspend the front end, with a rotary hydraulic steering damper to satisfy drag racing regulations. An Ohlins unit controls t'other end. Stopping this mobile money-eater are a pair of Spondon discs grabbed by ISR calipers at the sharp end and an RC30 disc matched to a Lockheed caliper at the stern. Braided hoses for these, and sundry other bits, set Ian back a cool £600 at trade price. Wheels are by Dymag and the nicely conceived paint job was executed by Dream Machine. I have to admit here that although it is pretty good I felt that the standard of this paintwork was not up to the rest of the bike.

Saturday evening saw me being frightened silly by a law car which I thought was chasing me, but since it didn't slow down when it passed by was obviously after bigger game, leaving me to continue on into Hinkley for my pie 'n' chips gourmet supper. Returning to the rugby clubhouse I happily joined in the attempt to drink them dry. We may have failed but at least it put everybody in the right mood for barracking the various Harris and Rickman owners tug o' war teams. Damned if I can remember who won, but I don't think anyone cared a toss anyway! All I will say is that judging by the ladies tug o' war there're some very funny women around in these clubs.

Nothing special about this Monkey bike but it's less far to fall after a few pints.

Sunday morning was given over to judging the concours after a splendid breakfast provided by a few stalwarts. The prize giving at lunchtime was a trifle confused (eh Mike?) so I make no apologies for any errors or omissions here:

Best Moto Martin: Shaun Shovelin's blue and white CBX.
Best Brit bike: Doug Davies's Norton Commando.
Best European powered special: Mark Eaton's Harris Ducati 600.
Best Harris: Brian Pyle's red Harribox.
Best Rickman: Phil Paramour (I think).
Best bike all over: Ian King's Harris Suzuki (of course).

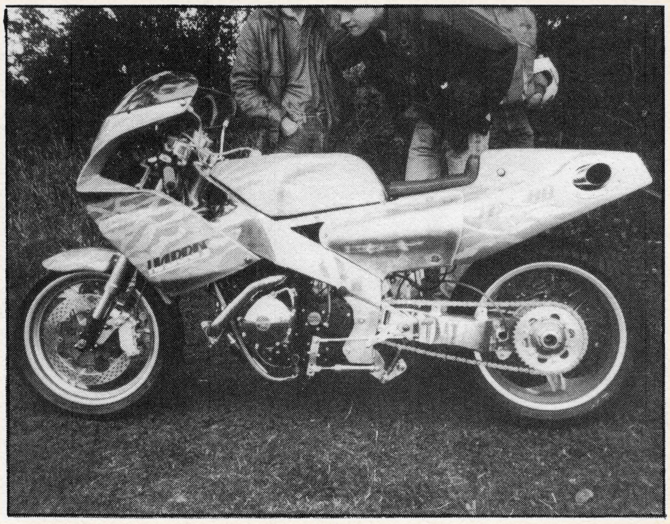
Rat bike was a one horse race, and went to Rick Parker with something unrecognisable under all the crud, which my memory tells me may once have been a Rickman (which probably means it was a Harris).

My journey up on Saturday was via the M25/M1 and frankly was murder, though I had the pleasure of meeting up with Steve and Julian Barker at the Watford Gap services. I left the services shortly before them (I thought) and expected to be zapped soon after as I was pottering along at near-legal speeds. However they didn't appear until I had been at Market Bosworth for some time. One of the brothers was on a Rickman Honda while the other was on a big Kwacker. Shortly after I left them an idiot tin-box kamikase pilot reversed into the Kwacker and knocked it over. Fortunately damage was of a largely cosmetic nature, but that accounted for the delay.

I was frankly horrified by the sheer weight of traffic on the motorways, which on occasion was suffiecient to reduce traffic to a crawl without the help of roadworks or an accident at the head. Vowing to totally avoid them on the return journey I took the A5 to London and enjoyed every inch of it, running the Duke up to the ton two or three times. Taking my courage in both hands I cut straight across London and was rewarded with a trouble free passage. I filled up with petrol at South Godstone and was continuing sedately on my way, when with much backfiring the Duke rapidly lost power and stopped. My plug spanner revealed a heathy-looking spark and recourse to the kickstart only produced a sore calf as she backfired a couple more times.

No rally is complete without the tug o' war.

Overall winnner, Ian King's Harris with turbo GSX-R 1100 engine complete with water injection.



The AA relayed me home and subsequent investigation revealed a float bowl half full of water. Unfortunately removing this produced no improvement and so, with visions of stripped timing gears I looked a bit deeper. The answer lay in the Lucas Rita ignition: the screw holding the rotor down onto its shaft had worked free and the backfiring had caused it to slip its location and rotate through 180 degrees before re-engaging. This time I put the screw back with Loctite.

Coming to the first Specials rally as an outsider, without knowing anyone present, I was gratified by the warm welcome I received and the friendly atmosphere of the whole weekend. My thanks go to all who took part, and especially to Michael Foulds, Keith Fothergill, and their band of helpers. Oh, and when do I get my rally badge?

BONANZA

Ed Buziak went to a slightly damp Yorkshire Biking Bonanza with camera and notebook.

The Yorkshire Biking Bonanza, presented by the Motorcycle Action Group at the Rufforth Equestrian Centre near York over the August Bank Holiday Weekend, was billed as a custom and classic bike show with bands, booze and burgers.

Ban Holiday . . . .yes, it chucked it down just as we expect on these occasions. Yorkshire being the home of true grit, it was expected of everybody to brave the elements, but they didn't have to. The covered arena provided protection for men and machines alike . . . .and what machines. Everything from B.S.A. to Z1. Chopped or straight from the shop, you name it, it was there. There was more horse-power assembled on two wheels in a weekend than had ever been seen on four legs before at the gee-gee ground. The machine that definitely drew the crowds was the B.S.A. Model M21 600cc side-value. Complete with the original purchase receipt itemising such extras as pillion seat and footrests, number plates, a tank full of petrol and oil, and including fully comprehensive insurance with The Provident Accident and White Cross Insurane Co Ltd at £12.0.0 (less War Bonus of £2.8.0) and 3 months Road Tax at £1.0.8 . . . the total price on the road on 4th Oct 1946 was £154.6.6 in 'old money' . . . .Eat your hearts out!

'Rebel Without a Cause' John Pletts arrived at 3pm on Saturday and just managed to get a tent up before the heavens really laid it down. He thought that the MAG meet seemed to have everything for the biker, and although not a member yet, he definitely would join.

Wheels being noticeably absent from near his tent he'd possibly come by Shank's Pony from nearby York. "My machine?", He mused. "I was going to get a new one for this weekend but the finance company won't let me have it." More like a Rebel Without a Bike! His spirits weren't dampened even though he'd been trying to cook some powdered soup all weekend. It was a case of more water on the fire than in the pan. John Christian had come on his bike, all the way from Norfolk with a slipping clutch, that was now knackered. He's a life member of MAG and rides to all the events like these on his 1976 Triumph Bonneville T140V. He'd just rebuilt the

John Pletts from York "Rebel without a bike"

bike's clutch from spare parts bought at the 'auto-jumble' and said "A Triumph is the perfect machine to break down on you here because most of the dealers do British and have got tons of spares between them."

He thought the weekend had been quite brilliant apart from the weather. He said, "The site's good, everyone's been happy and needless to say there's been no trouble." Bikers here don't talk negatively by raising the topic of rowdiness but he added, "You never get trouble at MAG meets because you don't get large numbers of people standing around trying to look hard all the time like you do at certain other events."

On one of the 'auto-jumble' stalls was Malcolm Maw from Pontefract. "Just 'ere to clear a bit of excess spares from t' garage", he said tucking into another banana rather than a bag of the famous licorice Cakes from his home town. He had every-thing from a light bulb to a lathe. "There's plenty more," said Mr Maw, "Where this came from!" Apart from a Triumph clutch he hadn't managed to sell much. "I don't know why 'cos there's a fair few people 'ere but they're just looking rather than actually buying anything." He came to the conclusion that, "There's not much money about, at least there's nowt about for me anyway!"

Ange (riding 883 Harley) and Tim Ollett from Beverley Yorkshire ▲

Malcolm Maw from Pontefract with some of his garage clear-out ▼

Still, he could afford to run three bikes; two Velocettes, a Venom and KSS, and a 50's rigid Triumph. He reckoned though that with bikes like those you could only ride them in good weather so normal transport, for him, had to be a car.

On the other had Tim and Ange Ollett, from near Beverley, go everywhere on their bikes — He on a Six-and-a-Half Chopped Bonnie' and she on a 'baby' 883 Harley. They thought that the weekend had been excellent at this venue, and so well organised with plenty to do and see under cover, that the rain didn't really matter.

The Olletts are typical in their support for MAG and all that it does. They go on all the mass rallies and runs, riding without helmets, but with the police escorting, helping to raise the public's awareness of their responsibility in wanting the freedom of choie on what to ride and hw to ride it.

As Tim Ollett says, "The proposed 400cc limit for newly qualifie cyclists is ridiculous when they can buy and ride a 250cc Japanese machine that accelerates quicker and goes faster than my wife's 833 Harley".

John Christian from Norfolk mending clutch on this Bonneville ►

They both emphatically say that 'having the choice' means just that. With the 'helmet law' — they'd wear them for at least 90% of the time, but on a really nice day, like the one in Brum recently when they drove through the middl of town, not alone mind you, with 4,000 others, the feeling of sun and wind through the hair was fantastic.

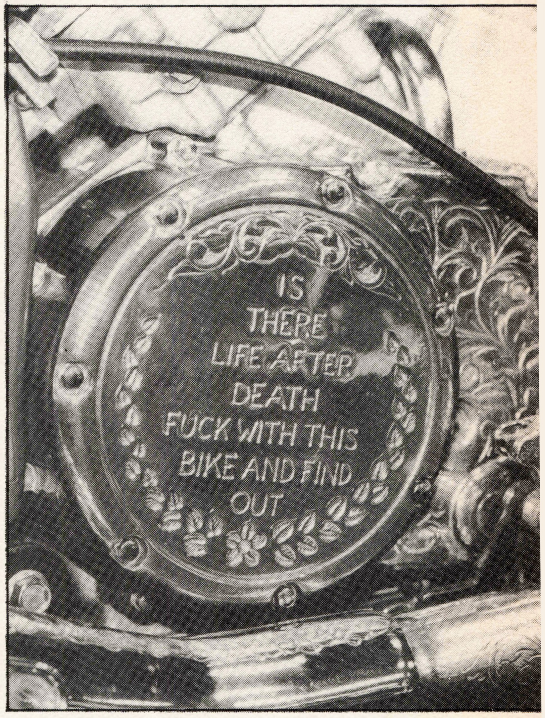
Dave Ramsden, who organised the Great Yorkshire Biking Bonanza and who was obviously a very busy man throughout the weekend, had time between mobile phone calls to marshals around the site to fill in Silver Machine on his role with the Motorcycle Action Group.

Dave is the full-time representative for the Yorkshire region of MAG. He covers all aspects of the group's activities, publicity, political lobbying, road safety work as well as organised half a dozen smaller events in the Yorkshire region but never done anything on this scale before.

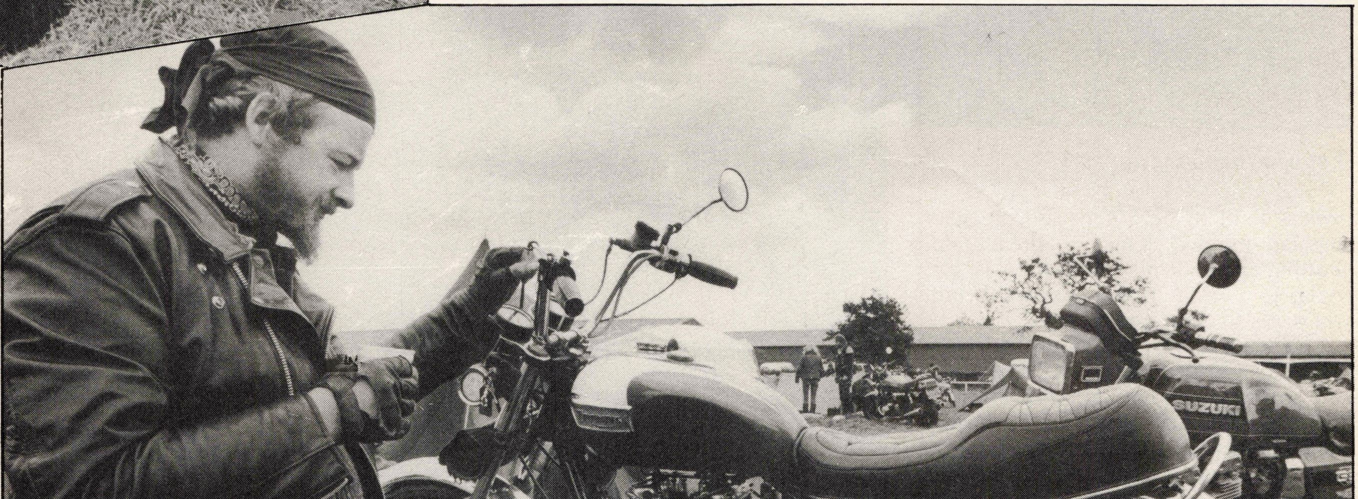
Around the camp site and in the arena, mingling wiht the strains of an Easy Rider soundtrack, were accents from all over the country. Many people had come a long way to be here and there were even half a dozen Dutch people on Saturday who all rode in on Harley 45's. They were let in for 'nowt, as they say in these parts, to have a look around before going to a Harley-Davidson rally nearby.

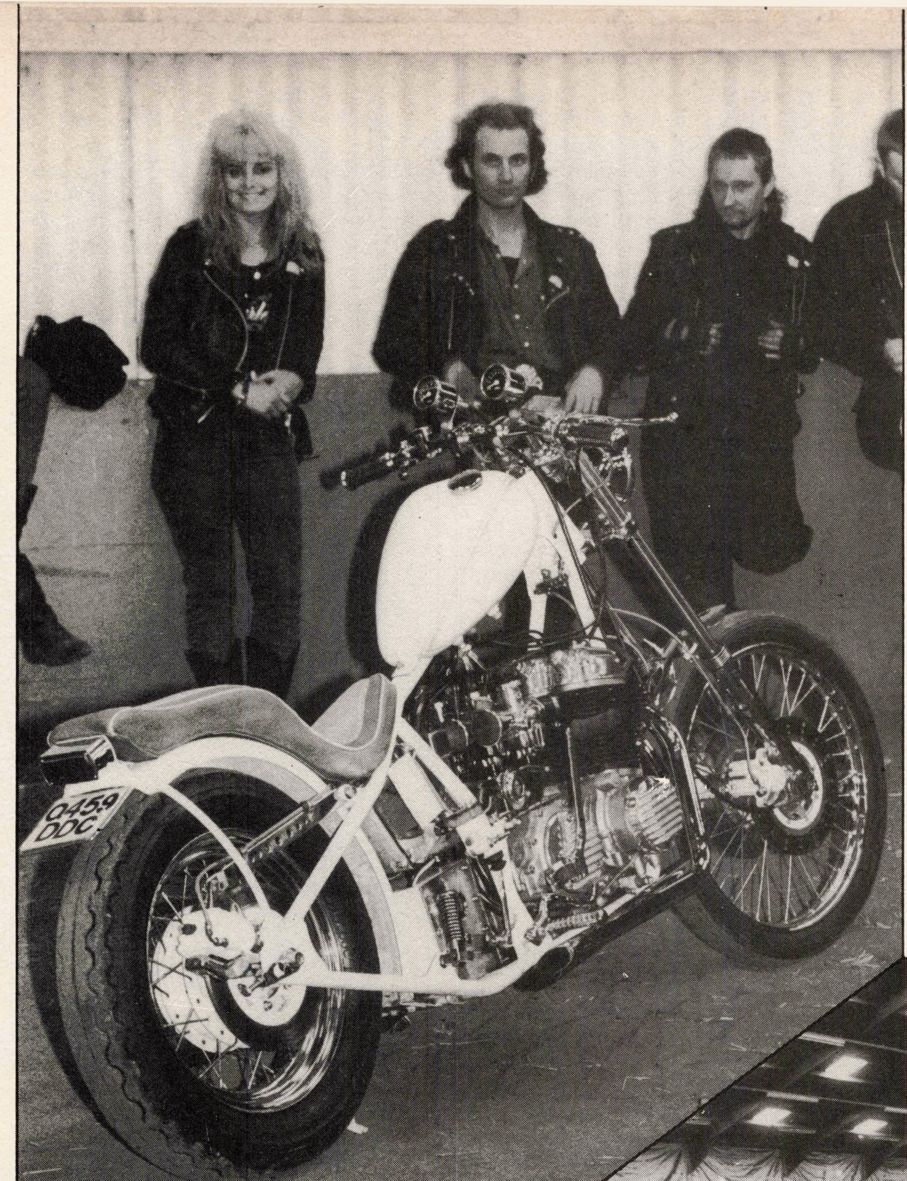
With a MAG rally it doesn't really matter if there's a 'one-make' rally on nearby and the attendance certainly doesn't suffer. As dave Ramsden said, "The calendar isn't big enough to expect there to be nothing else on and in fact there are a lot of Harleys here today . . . .from a rival club."

In fact the best display of the weekend was of . . . .you've guessed it, Harleys. In fact in what definitely looked like a cross between Hick Town and OK. Corral, were a wild looking bunch out to promote the Hog Owners Club. Still, you can take a hog to water but you can't make it drink . . . That means they didn't get any new members! They reckoned that Hog



Warning message on . . . ?





Loungers admiring a . . . ?

owners tend to be loners and are very singular minded. One of them said, “Putting on a display anywhere is like trying to preach to the converted, but, you’ve got to come and be seen.”

The tents in the two fields had been there since Friday night, and although it had howled down until Sunday morning, nearly everybody stayed. That’s probably because many of the faces were familiar ones to be seen at similar runs all around the country. They know there’s always plenty of “extra fun” to be had over these weekends but most of the experiences are unfit for print here. Various deeds of a sexual nature and deviancy, to say the least, always come up in bleary eyed conversations the morning after over the hiss of the Calor Gas burners and the scraping up of baked beans from billy cans.

Dave Ramsden recalled that everyone had been so well behaved that is surprised him when a couple of lads thought it sporting to throw an oil drum at each other, and head butt it! “It was quite good humoured ‘cos ‘e said throw it at me ‘ead . . . so he did, smack on the head, a 40 gallon oil drum, straight on the head, and then he wondered why he had blood running down his face.”

The only other problem the organisers had over the weekend was the perennial one about the noise. There was only one house within earshot of the music venue, and after several complaints from them, they managed to raise the Environmental Health Officer from his bed at 1 o’clock in the morning, “Which didn’t please him one bit”, Dave added with a grin.

So on the Saturday night they agreed to finish by midnight, which they didn’t but instead turned the volume down a bit so it couldn’t be heard from the outside but was still great to hear from the inside where it mattered.

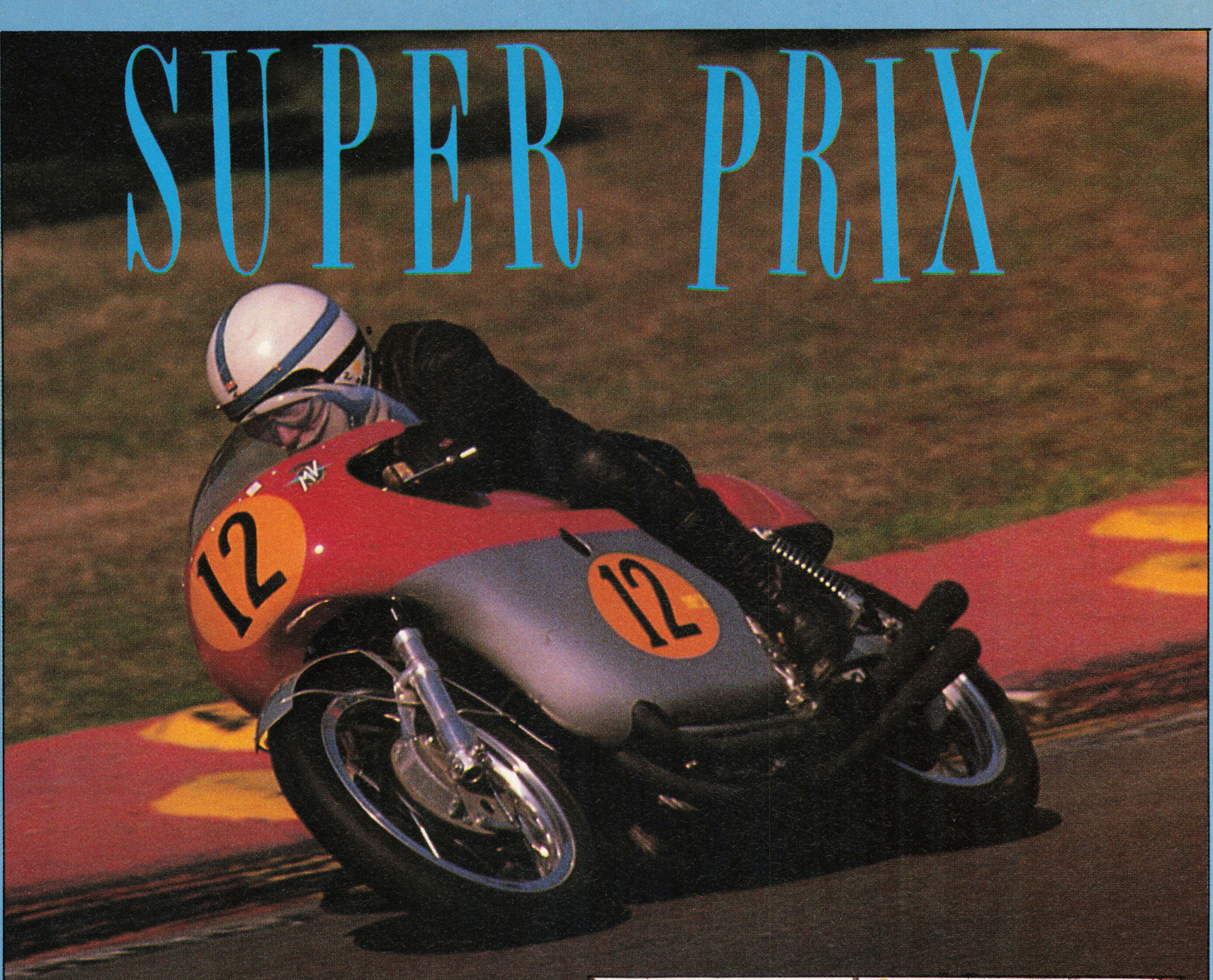
And next year? Dave doesn’t know yet, “We’ll have to wait and see”, he said, “When I’ve recovered, I’ll decide.”

BONANZA

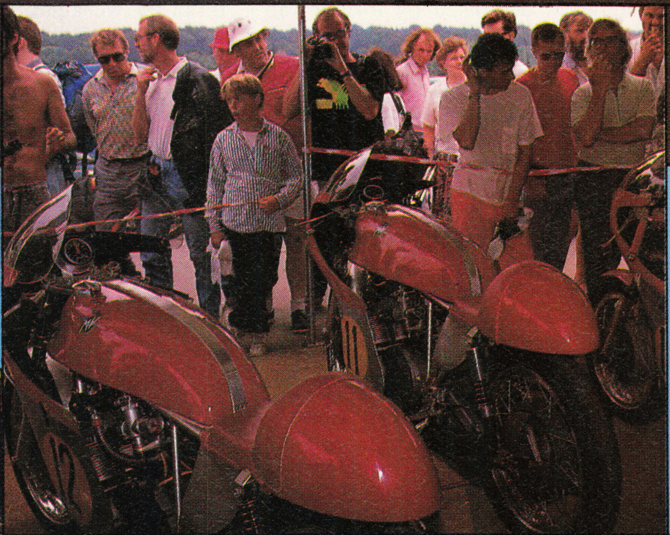
Main arena bike display

OPEN
BAR
HARLEY
DAVIDSON

SUPER PRIX



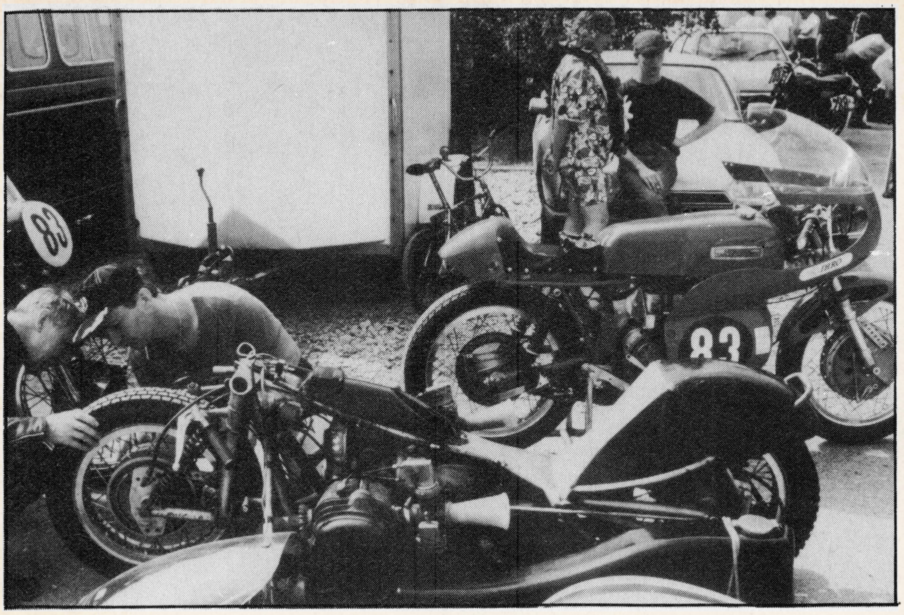
John Surtees aboard his late 50s MV Agusta 500 four.



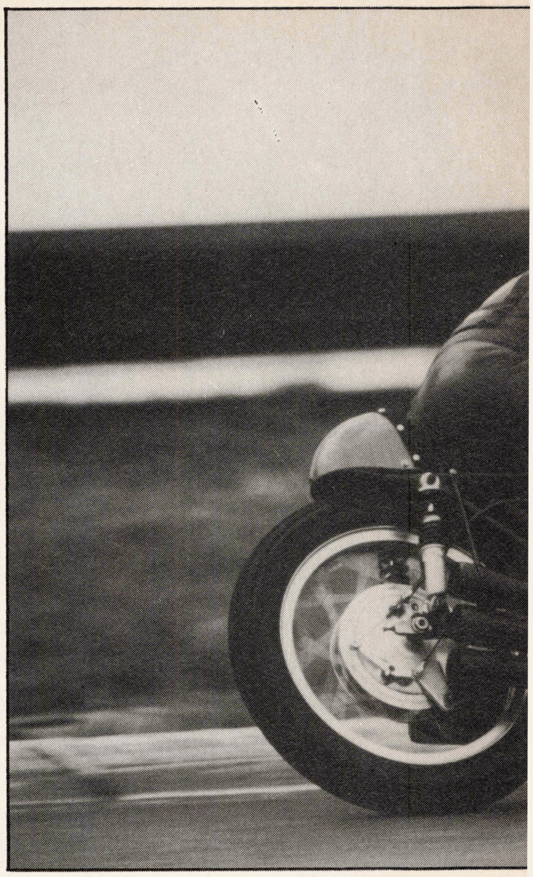
Spectators drool over the MV display in the PHAB tent.

A full grid of 36 Manx Nortons prepare for the start of the Ray Petty Trophy race, thunder is about to roll!

The biggest crowd for a bike race at Brands in many years witnessed the first ever Super Prix, Alan Cathcart reports, photos by Phil Masters



Solo star Jim Evans made his sidecar debut on this original Rennsport outfit.



The ex-Hailwood Honda six howled round for a few demonstration laps much to the delight of the crowd.

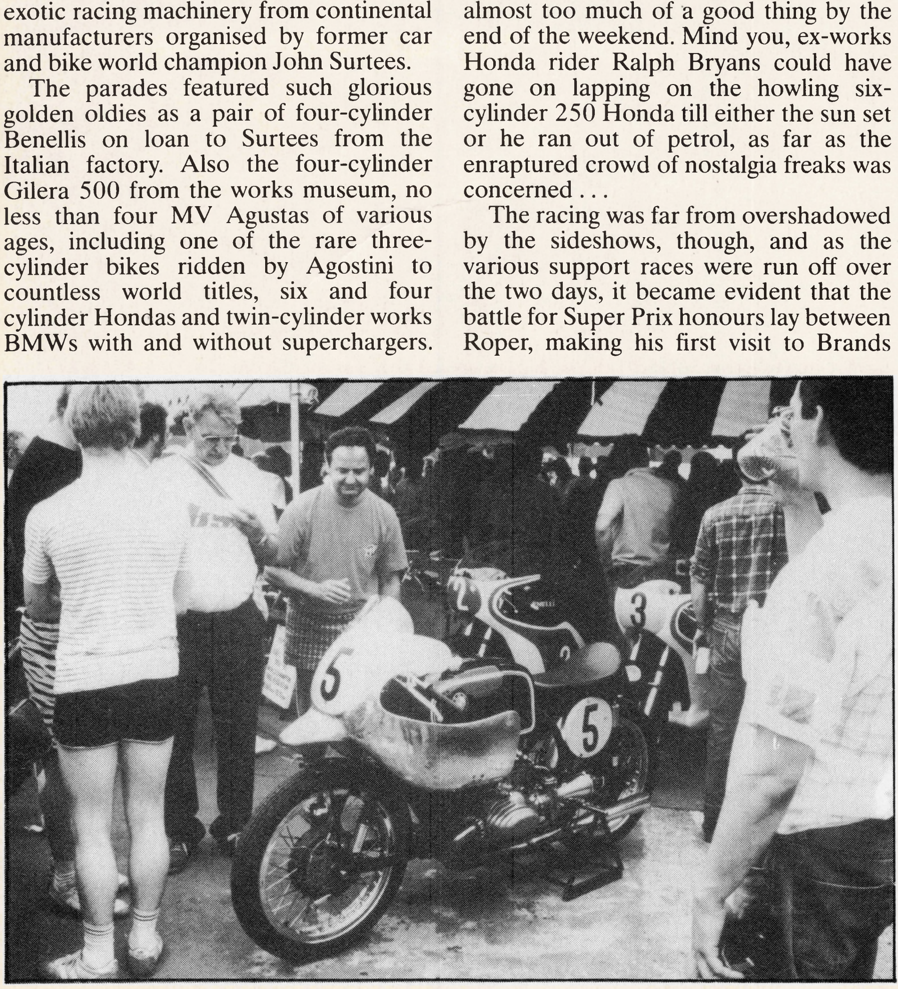
American Dave Roper, aboard the Team Obsolete Matchless G50, took an undisputed victory in Britain's premier Historic bike race of the season, the 20-lap Classic Super Prix held at Brands Hatch on July 16.

Organised as the tenth birthday celebrations of Britain's Classic Racing Motorcycle Club, the meeting not only featured a total of 38 races over the two days, including the Super Prix and the annual Ray Petty Trophy exclusively for pre-'64 Manx Nortons, but also saw a series of parades and demonstrations of exotic racing machinery from continental manufacturers organised by former car and bike world champion John Surtees.

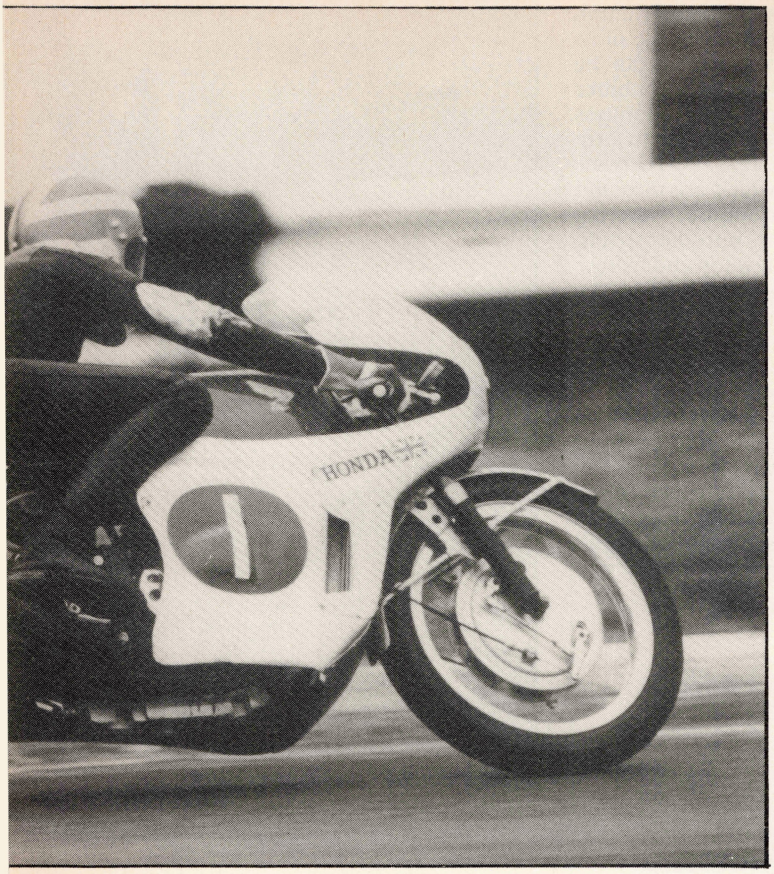
The parades featured such glorious golden oldies as a pair of four-cylinder Benellis on loan to Surtees from the Italian factory. Also the four-cylinder Gilera 500 from the works museum, no less than four MV Agustas of various ages, including one of the rare three-cylinder bikes ridden by Agostini to countless world titles, six and four cylinder Hondas and twin-cylinder works BMWs with and without superchargers. Of more recent vintage, the Daytona-winning Quantel-Cosworth BoTT bike made a farewell to the track in the hands of its former rider, now retired, Roger Marshall. Riding these bikes were an array of riders from various eras, from Surtees himself, Roper, Marshall, former Brands Hatch star Derek Minter, Manx GP winner Richard Swallow, and trials ace Sammy Miller. The series of demonstrations kept the huge crowd, certainly the largest seen at a bike meeting at Brands Hatch for many years, spellbound, even if slightly jaded from almost too much of a good thing by the end of the weekend. Mind you, ex-works Honda rider Ralph Bryans could have gone on lapping on the howling six-cylinder 250 Honda till either the sun set or he ran out of petrol, as far as the enraptured crowd of nostalgia freaks was concerned . . .

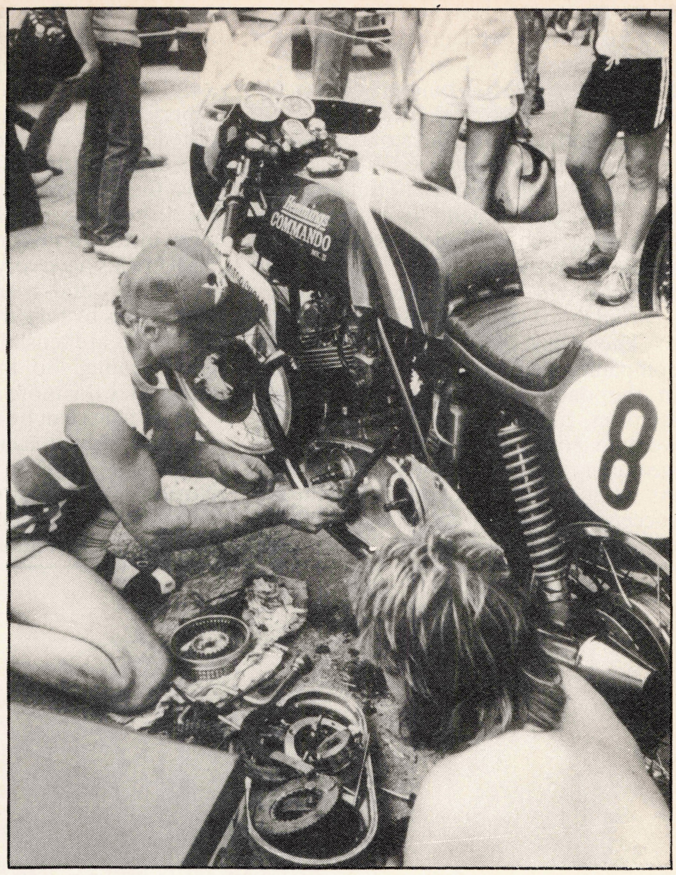
The racing was far from overshadowed by the sideshows, though, and as the various support races were run off over the two days, it became evident that the battle for Super Prix honours lay between Roper, making his first visit to Brands Hatch, and the four-times former world champion Hugh Anderson from New Zealand, winner just three weeks beforehand of the 1989 Dutch Historic TT during the GP meeting at Assen. Both he and Roper were riding G50 Matchless machines in the Super Prix, restricted to bikes built before the end of 1963 under the CRMC's Period 1 rules, up to 500cc in capacity. First though, there was the Manx Norton-only race for the Ray Petty Trophy, run over 8 laps and won by Chris McGahan on Ian Telfer's 500cc 1962 machine, after an initial tussle with former Honda works rider and IoM TT winner Alex George, on John Douds' similar bike. First in the separate 350cc class was 22-year old David May riding his father's 1959 Manx, ahead of Dave Duxbury on Telfer's second bike, a very original 1958 machine. The full grid of 36 bikes showed there are plenty of Manx Nortons still around in racing condition, and with Britain's Summerfield Engineering now able to supply a brand new 500cc Manx engine to original specification for £6,000, there should be more of the most famous British single-cylinder racer out on the tracks in historic meetings in the future.

Chris McGahan had previously distinguished himself by performing a remarkable stunt in aid of charity, standing on the wing of a pre-WW2 Tiger Moth biplane piloted by one-legged flyer Tony Calvey (himself a former racer) as it circled the track 500 feet in the air, dressed in his racing leathers. Beneficiaries of this sponsored display of looniness were the PHAB charity (Physically Handicapped but Able Bodied), who also took a proportion of

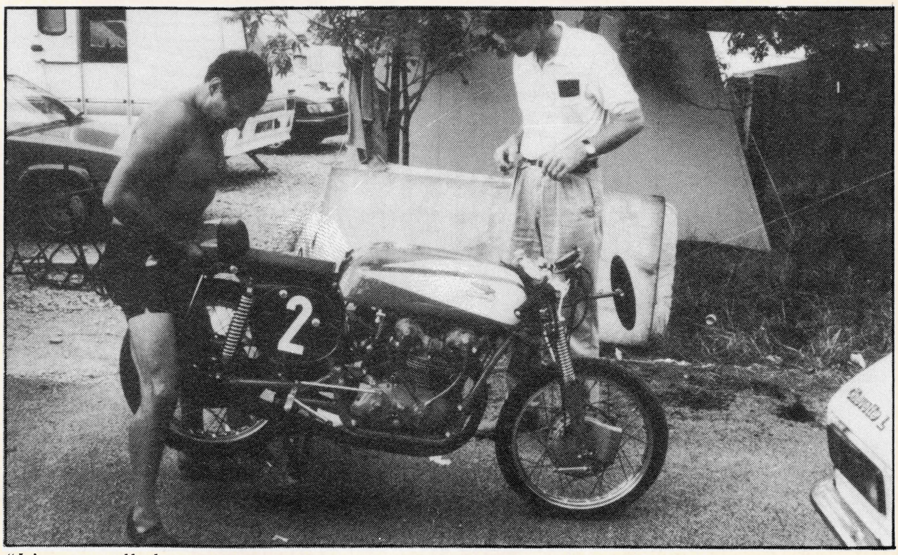


The 1954 BMW RS500 type 254 belonging to German visitor Gunther Knuppertz.





Mick Hemmings getting his hands dirty on his fast Norvil proddy racer.



"It's not really heavy, honest" Maurice Ogier lifts the unique ex-works Ducati 250 twin.

the meeting's proceeds for their funds. Back on earth, and on two wheels rather than two wings, it was McGahan who again distinguished himself by leading off the line for the Super Prix aboard Telfer's 500 Norton, though the heavier bike was overhauled before the first turn by equally fast-starting Jim Evans on his lighter Matchless G50. Roper was back in the pack, but soon moved through to third place, tracked by Anderson whose push-start was handicapped by the serious foot injury he suffered racing in New Zealand at the start of the year, from which he's still recovering.

Evans looked to be trying to make a break for it, as a gap opened up between him and the rest, as Roper looked for a way round Brands expert McGahan, who lives only a stone's throw from the circuit entrance. By lap 3, Roper was in second place, as McGahan slowed and pulled off with clutch trouble. Moments later, Evans' engine cut out dead on him at the off camber Clearways turn for no apparent reason; he just saved the resulting near-accident, and pushed back to the pits with what appeared to be a malfunctioning magneto.

This left the two main protagonists on each other's heels, with Anderson using his superior Brands experience to close up on Roper at the start of lap 5, looking for a way past at Paddock Bend. Next time around, he found the way, cutting up the inside of Roper under braking and forcing through as they both turned into the long downhill sweep. Roper thought about closing the door, but hesitated just long enough to let the Kiwi through. Not for long, though: the American counter-attacked just two corners later, sweeping past Anderson on the downhill left hander of Graham Hill Bend to retake the lead. "I could see Hugh was really fired up, so I couldn't let him lead too long as we were just starting to lap the slower guys, and I might have got held up," said Roper. He was right, and in turning the tables he managed to open up a short lead that quickly became a two second one within three laps as the leading pair encountered traffic. "I could see I wasn't going to be able to keep up, so I knocked it back and settled for second," said Anderson. "Dave was riding really well and his bike's a flyer: he had the race sewn up by half distance, though I still kept my head down in case he ran into any problems."

No such luck for the Kiwi, as Roper pulled steadily away to win comfortably and ensure a rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner on the victory rostrum. Anderson was second, with Malcolm Clark recovering from a bruising fall in the first race of the meeting to be first Briton home in third place, to make an all-Matchless top three. Behind, though, it was the battle of the Nortons, with Jerry Summerfield providing a good advert for his family's Manx spares business by pegging back Paul Barrett's similar bike, to overtake him for fourth place just before half distance. Barrett wound up fifth, just ahead of Richard Aldous on another Manx Norton, owned and raced by his father Dick for no less than 21 years before finally letting his son take it over!

The CRMC plan to turn the Super Prix into an annual event on the same dates each year; one who won't complain is circuit owner John Webb, who cancelled his flight to attend the rival British car GP at Silverstone the same weekend when he saw the size of the Brands crowd.

Frank Westworth looks into AMC twin engines . . .

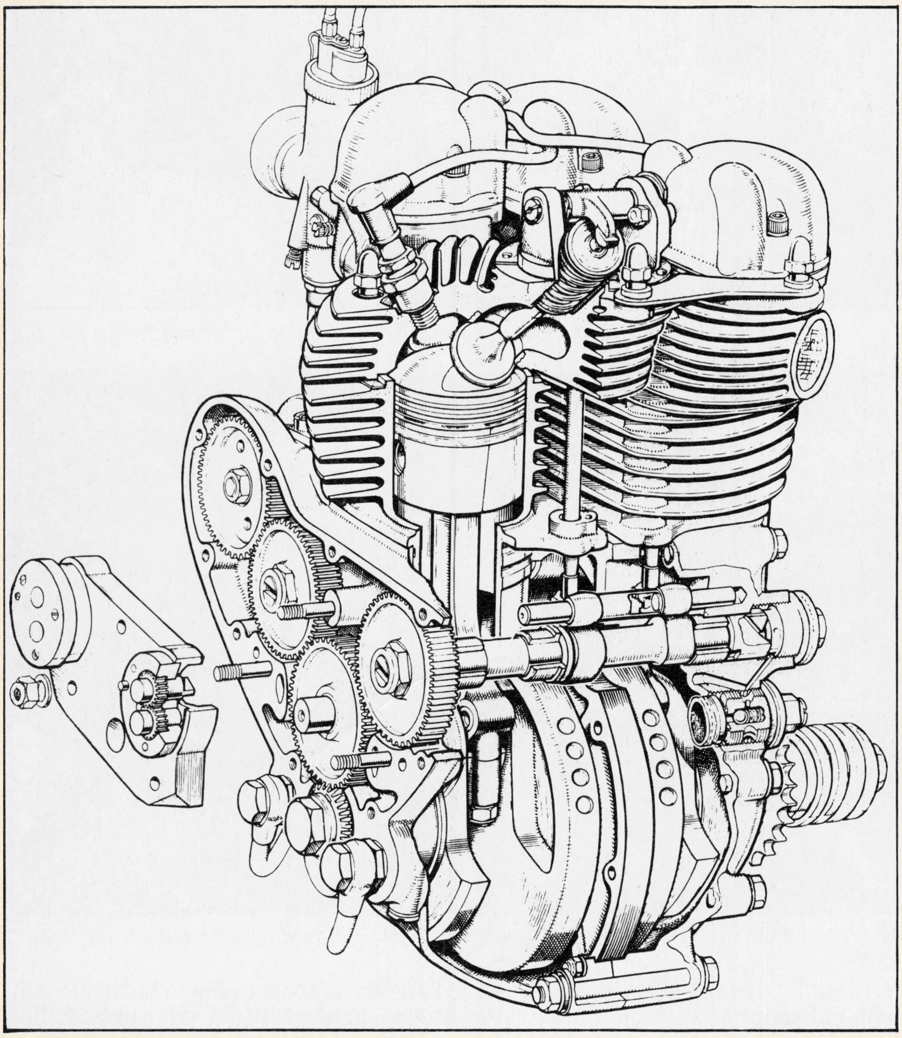
AMC

Way back when, far off in the mists of time (well, just after the end of the last war, really) Associated Motorcycles (AMC), builders of the well-known AJS and Matchless ranges of singles, both sporting and stolid, needed a twin engine. And they needed it badly, as their great rivals, BSA and Triumph, both had well-established twin machines headlining their catalogues; even the smaller mass-constructors, Norton and Royal Enfield, were ready to launch one.

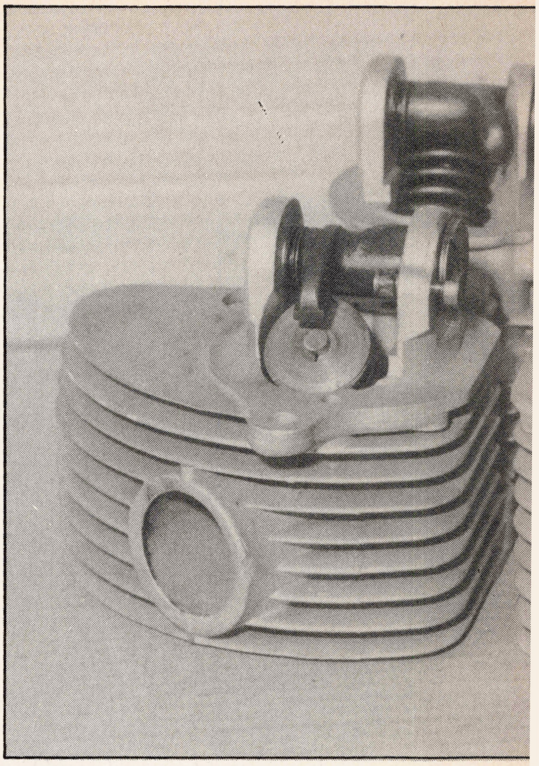
From this distance in time, it is difficult to know just how aware competing companies were of the surprises brewing in the darker corners of their rivals' factories, but we can be sure that AMC went to some lengths to eradicate the weaknesses of the opposition's designs. As we shall see, to a certain extent they succeeded, and they certainly produced a unique engine, but by overcoming perceived design weaknesses, they rather ironically managed to produce a family of engines with tender areas all of their own.

Triumph twins, you see, leak; Norton twins clatter — and BSAs can be fiddly to fix. AMC looked at these simple and rather obvious failings, and cured them. At a stroke. Or several. The Triumph tends to drip its lubricant by virtue of its separate pushrod tubes, which can be awfully hard to seal (he sighs, from bitter experience). It also has countless fastenings, all of which are prone to strip — which lets the lube leak. AMC twins have their pushrods (which are nice and short, just like the Triumph's) wavering away inside tunnels cast into the barrels. AMC twins have very few top end fixings. The heads and barrels are held to the crankcases by long through bolts, and the joint faces are sensibly wide, to encourage good sealing. So they don't leak? I'm afraid they do; more later.

BSA twins can be awkward to work on (at least if you lack the vital pushrod "comb" — AMC's twin is simple; the Norton rattles tend to be caused by slack chains driving the cam and the magneto in the timing side and a sculpture of a head casting which resonates wonderfully. The drive to the AMC twin's cams, mag and dynamo is all by gears, in a timing case full of oil, and is very quiet.



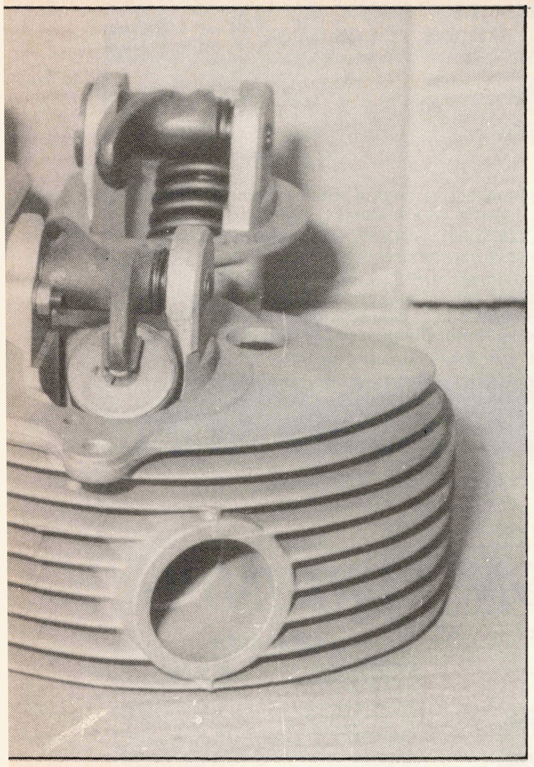
AMC's designers really went to town when they drew up the bottom end, producing a crank which was unique among British 4-stroke twins in that it has not two main bearings, supporting the crank only at the ends, but three, the central bearing being a split-shell type, like a conventional big end. The idiosyncracy of the top end design is that the heads and barrels are separate castings, which, like the three-bearing crank is a construction with both strengths and weaknesses.

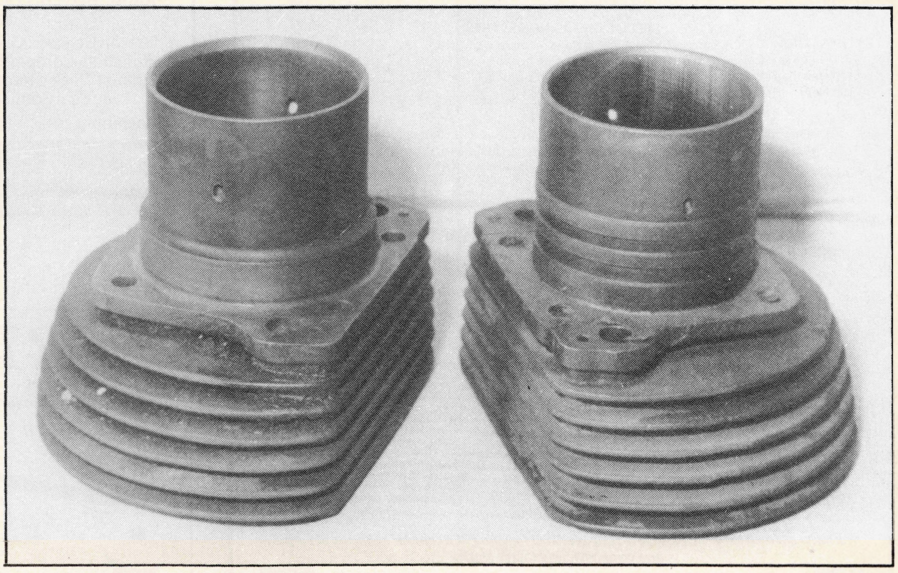


Separate heads and barrels and eccentric tappet adjusters are an AMC feature

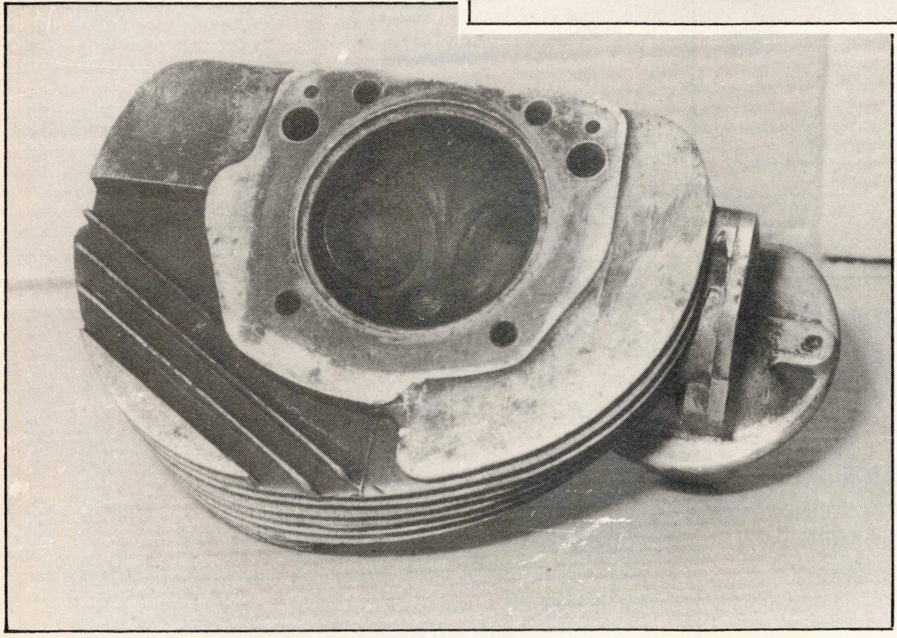
Lets say it now; the Matchless (or AJS, if you prefer) engine is a sound piece of British engineering, and is even today capable of supplying years and years, miles and miles, of reliable service. It doesn't like being over-revved and it does like clean oil.

In this writer's opinion, the top end design of the AMC twin is the best and easiest to work on of all the twins. The valve clearances are adjusted by simply turning the rocker spindle, which is eccentric, with a screwdriver, and the rocker covers themselves are held on by two allen bolts each (there are four of them). If there are leaks from this area, something is radically wrong, and I have never understood why some sixties coffee clowns drilled them for breathers, except possibly for the pose. Adjusting the valve clearances is so simple, that it is perhaps a shame that they don't need doing more often! On my own 650 Ajay, I have only adjusted them once in over 20,000 miles, and then they didn't really need it.





All barrels aren't interchangeable so check if you buy at jumbles



Later heads had diagonal cooling fins

The 650 motors, for some unknown reasons, are prone to blowing head gaskets. They usually do it in spates, and spit a chunk of red hot wire/asbestos composite into the rider's boot. the 500 and 600 twins do not feature this endearing trait, and much discussion goes on in the owners' club about its solution. Whenever I have the heads off, I'm afraid that I always try to re-use the original gaskets, and if I do need to use new ones, I buy them from the owners club. Whatever, it is essential to keep the heads at the correct torque after re-fitting them (22 lb/ft, post '63 twins 25 lb/ft) and to check them every hundred miles or so for the first five or six hundred miles. They should be safe after that . . .

Moving on down, as we say, it is fairly common to see what appears to be an oil leak from the cylinder base. This is far more likely to be a leak from the oil gallery which is formed between the crankcase halves, and will require a complete engine strip to rectify. It is worth catching this leak while it is a baby, too, because the separate heads/barrels design, while making top end work a doddle, is considered by some learned types to be insufficiently rigid to prevent the crankcase halves fretting and wearing with vibration. And leaks only get worse, do they not?

At the top end of the bottom end (does this make sense, Mr Editor?) live the cams and their followers, especially the exhaust ones. The cam followers are of a simple and effective design, and operate like short levers; pivoting at one end and carrying the pushrod at the other. This is great in the case of the inlet camshaft, where the followers trail, but the opposite is true with the exhaust end, where the followers lead the cam. Fortunately, the flowering of the old bike movement has meant that worn-out cams and followers can now be re-faced with modern materials, which are very resistant to this wear. So; the hearty clatter which comes from the crankases will probably be dead or dying cams, and check what you are getting when you buy replacements.

At the front end of the motor is the oil filter. This is conveniently situated for frequent cleaning — so clean it frequently! Every time you change the oil in fact. The lube system of this engine was carefully thought out, and is intended to give both the long and the quiet life, but it can't do this if the system is clogged with thousand year-old clag instead of lubricant. End of lesson.

The most notorious failing of the AMC twin is its crankshaft. In one of life's sadder ironies, it is almost inevitable that the manufacturers who took the pains to design a crank which had the most support should heve the most trouble with it. Crank failure doesn't occur on the 500 and 600 twins; only on the 650s, and only then if the motor is really revved hard. The factory recognised the problem very soon after the launch of the 650s (in fact, as the big twins were launched in the States first, they knew all about it before the models were launched at all in the UK).

You needn't really worry about buying a bike which has a knackered crank unless it is in bits . . . the big ends have a long life, again because of the sound lubrication system, and the mains can last for ever — it's just that sometimes the cranks broke . . . I think that it is safe to say that if the crank was going to snap, it would have done so by now. There is also a convincing shortage of spare 650 twin cranks available from the Autojumble Spares

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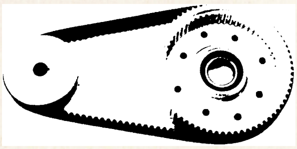

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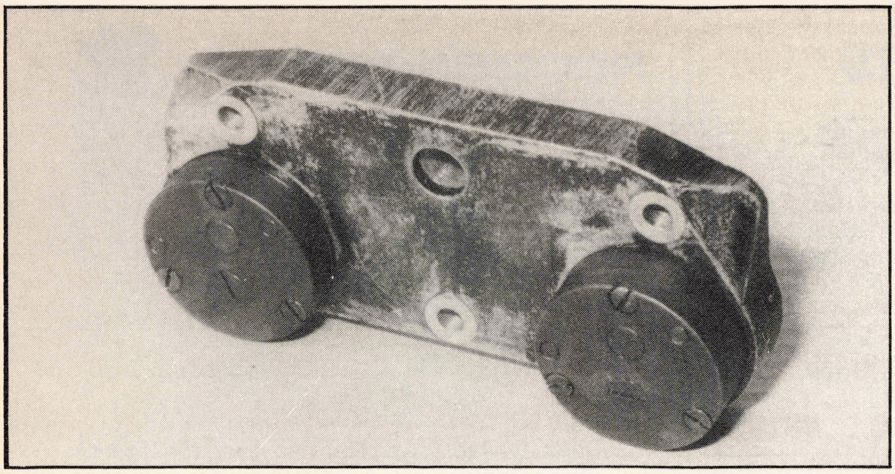
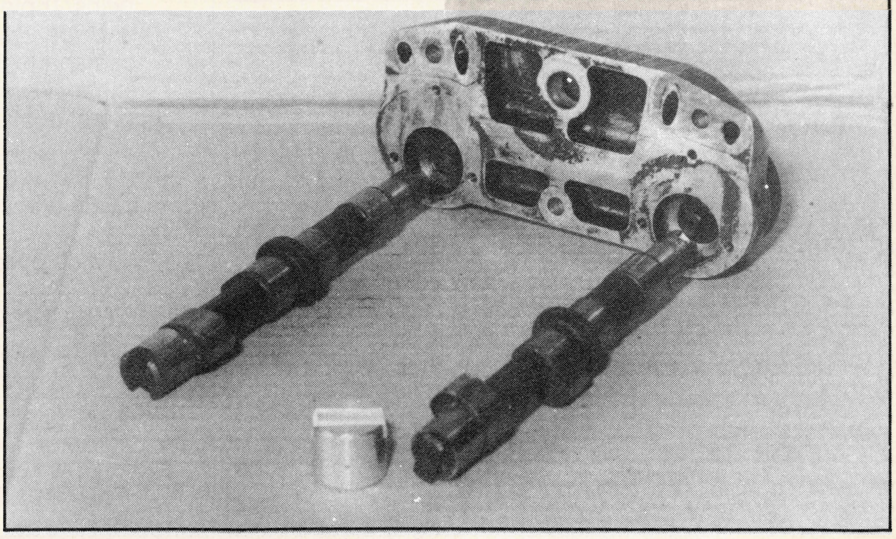


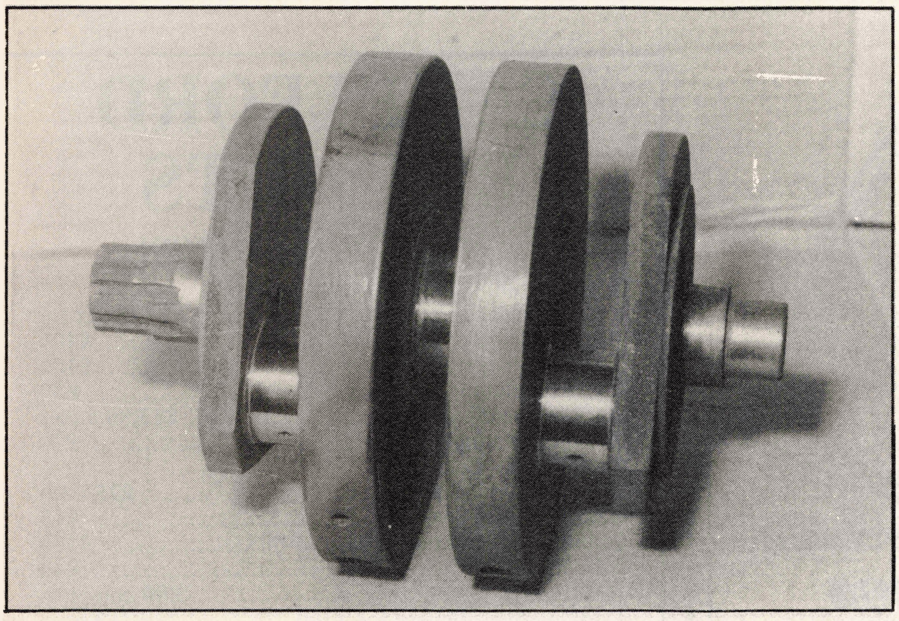
Twin oil pumps can be had as reconditioned exchange items

Emporium, so look after the one you've got. On the other hand, AMC twins were recognised as being good sidecar haulers, like BSA's Flash, and many of the old warriors survived for tens of thousands of miles without harm.

AMC cured the problem by changing the material of the crank from cast iron to cast iron — which shows how tricky these things are. The crank was originally made from Meehanite, and was changed to nodular iron sometime around 1960. No-one seems to know exactly when, but if you are confronted by two 650 cranks of unknown origin, the one to buy is the one which goes "doing" when you tap it with a spanner. The earlier type just emit a dull "clunk" given the same treatment — strange but true.



Camshafts drive the pumps and engine breather, they can be reprofiled



Crankshaft has white metal centre journal for extra support

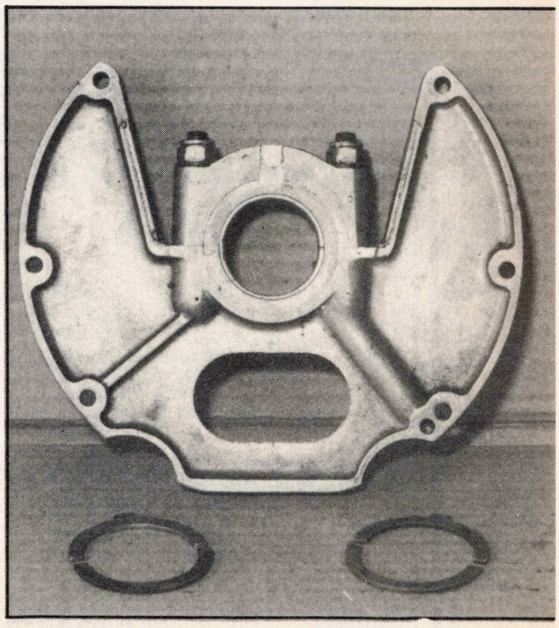
The AMC twin engine has geared oil pumps (two of them; one to push lube around the motor, and the other to return it to the tank), and pumps the oil to the centre main bearing. From there it goes to the big ends, and then off on its travels around the rest of the works. The camshafts have their own mini sumps, and the oil is fed in pulses (there is an oil distributer on the end of the exhaust camshaft) to the rockers. It is a very good system, but it is only as good as the oil in it.

There are few ways of tuning these engines these days by using easily available parts. The factory once marketed a "speed kit" but these make Dodo eggs seem common these days, so you aren't going to find one. Most of the bikes fitted with them will be in the hands of people who never ride them — such is the classic way of things. pistons were once available in several compression ratios, but only a single, sensibly low, ratio is found these days. You may be tempted to fit twin carbs, in place of the single one which the factory fitted. I tend to the opinion that any gain in performance is offset by a reduction in top end rigidity caused by doing away with the single carb manifold. You could replace the Monobloc with a (slightly) more modern Concentric, but you should be careful with the jetting if you do.

An increasing number of owners are fitting electronic ignition systems to their twins, in an effort at getting away from increasingly unreliable magnetos and distributors full of unobtainable parts. This is a good idea.

These engines, in all their sizes, are excellent workhorses, and will grunt out their intended horsepower for years and years, with little attention other than regular oil changes. I have talked about their strengths and their weaknesses; it's up to you owners to use them for what they were intended — riding.

AMC ANTICS



Centre web that holds the crank has to be shimmed either side

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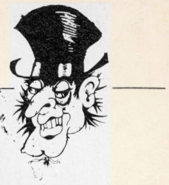

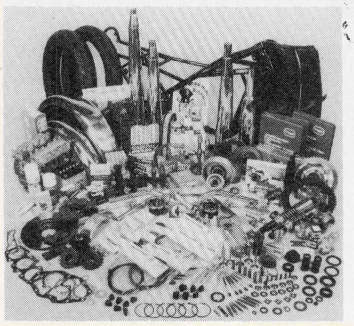

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GUEST SPOT

Andover Norton's Mike Jackson offers his views on a few topics

Reflections, Revelations . . . and Reverberations

In January this year I completed a quarter century in the motorcycle industry. It is hard to believe how the time did fly with the exception, perhaps, of a two year period in the mid seventies when I was selling Easy Riders; the moped produced by NVT. It was on 31.12.63 that I travelled to the Greeves factory at Thundersley for half a days "sales training". By lunchtime next day I had signed up Bob Gollner — my first Dealer, and his first Dealership! Bob was happy, Greeves were happy, so were a couple of Waterlooville clubmen astride brand new TES trials irons. My commission, based on an all up price of £148.7.6. (including Purchase Tax) amounted to half a crown short of £3.00. So I was happy too. And that's the way it's been, for five and twenty years.

It's been a month of "Bye bye Bottomley" headlines in all the motorcycle mags. I cannot let him pass out of our lives, hopefully forever, without tossing in some comments of my own — but not all of them are derogatory. The man was undoubtedly a zealot which, coupled with a Cabinet Directive to *reduce motorcycle injuries at all costs*, meant we were on a hiding to nothing. In my view, to go down the leg protector avenue was not the answer to the mutual problem, but the quango men at the TRRL, knobbled Bottomley quite early on; and the tragedy is that amongst the bureaucrats at Bracknell there are one or two quite capable motorcyclists. What they should have said to Bottomley, on the day of his first visit, was: *"We think you should make headlights compulsary for daytime riding"*. That would have been non-controversial legislation and there is a chance that it may even have made a genuine reduction in the carnage (a Cabinet word, not mine) at least with those accidents that occur in daylight or early dusk. More importantly, the politicians would have let it run for 2 years, and then decided to make a study of those results over the 12 months following. And so on. Nevertheless, Bottomley made a real effort to learn about motorcycles, motorcyclists, and motorcycling. To my real knowledge he visited an Earls Court exhibition, a Custom Show in Kent, the 1000 Bikes Festival at Brands; he also went along to the launch of the Norton Commander and at least a couple of other trade functions. He was on first name terms with a number of industry luminaries so he did make a genuine attempt to absorb the scenario and immerse himself in our affairs. I heard him speak at a trades awards evening in London back in March this year and he (or his speech writer) could not be faulted. His message was very clear. He was not anti-motorcycle and certainly not anti motorcycle sales, but *he was most definitely anti motorcycle accident.* In retrospect those ghastly leg shields will be far more use in Northern Ireland than they ever will be on a motorcycle! But Bottomley's most remarkable venture of all was to visit the factories of the Fraternal four in Japan. To me this seemed akin to inviting Herr Reichmarschall Goering into the Spitfire and Hurricane factories circa 1941. Meantime we must all keep our airbags crossed and hope that the new bloke isn't a zealot, an ayatollah, or even a mullah.

I am frequently asked to pass opinion on the events within the British motorcycle industry (that was) with special reference to the failure of Norton Villiers Triumph. On whichever side of the fence you sat, the catalyst *(which is the euphemism in this case for the beginning of the end)* was Meriden. If the Meriden factory wasn't prepared — and it wasn't — to be part of Dennis Poore's Grand Plan then the Grand Plan wasn't going to work. I have, over the years, been drawn int many an argument with folk who were, and probably still are, convinced that Poore was intent only upon closing factories down and selling them off. They will fiercely argue their corner to the last breath and yet, when asked if they knew NVT's original intentions at the time, they confess they have no idea.

If I am invited back for another month I will be delighted to expound that Grand Plan — suffice to say those rugged little Villiers industrial engines would have survived in production to this day and genuine parts for Triumph twins would never ever have been made in any great volume other than in one of the company factories; in other words the pirates, be they in Paignton or Pusan, would not have got hold of the spares business. Maybe we can return to this theme another day . . .

Can someone explain to me why it is that in the period 1979-80, when the UK saw nearly 600,000 new registrations there were just 7 motorcycle magazines in print, whereas in the 2 years between 1987 and 1988 the total number of publications had increased to 21 magazines but sales of new motorcycles had shrunk to less than 200,000? I have never obtained a satisactory answer to this from anyone in the trade or the industry, nor even from anyone in the 2 wheel publishing business. Perchance Lord EMAP himself has the answer; mind you, in his ever modest fashion he declined to own more than 8 of these 21 titles. Why, too, is it that Rupert Murdoch is often now described as a *rich man's Mark Williams?*

Of course, there is one question to which everyone has the answer, and that's provoked by asking, "Do you prefer Earls Court or the NEC for the location of the annual Bike Show?" My Poll mole, who sports a distinctive Brummie accent, opines that 55-60% prefer the wide open spaces of the NEC. But there's a vociferous lobby of bikers based in Kent, Sussex and Surrey who have never ever been to a show other than in London (or to a race meeting other than at Brands!) These worthies undoubtedly prefer the wide open puddles of S.W.5. Whatever, they will miss a good display if they choose to boycott the NEC in November — both Chater Lea and Calthorpe are due for a relaunch.

I don't suppose for a minute that Dave Thorpe will feature that highly in the *Sportsbloke of the Year Polls* with which we will be bombarded by the popular press and TV companies at year end. And yet *he should be very highly featured.* I think his 1989 World Championship win itself is a quite remarkable achievement but what impresses most about Thorpe on this occasion is that it is his 3rd such championship. Lesser mortals will surely never know upon just what reserves of discipline and stamina he had to call in the winning of this championship. Many of my contemporaries perenially insist that the two European Championships by Bickers (on Greeves) in 1960/61 and Jeff Smith's double World Championship (on BSA) in 64/65 were so much greater than anything subsequently achieved by a British MX-er. Not so. Herefrom, Dave Thorpe is rightfully elected to membership of that hyper exclusive 2 man club, and with a vengeance!

There were two pervading smells at the Donnington Grand Prix this year. The first was money; tobacco money, and the other was the smell of fine food permeating through the paddock — courtesy of the dozens of hospitality facilities funded by the sponsors. God Bless 'em! The Grand Prix scene, with or without Bernie (yet), is very big bucks indeed these days epitomised best of all, I suppose, by the transport and transporters of the race teams themselves. I think we all accept that the race machinery is the ultimate with 4 or 5 teams on the grid sporting *money no object* equipment. But the support systems are something else, especially when you consider — unlike the Formula One racing car circus — that the top 3 runners are actually operating 12,000 miles from base. I mention the food smells because they provide the perfect contrast with a race meeting (not a Grand Prix) I once went to with Tony Godfrey, a former British 500cc Champion. This was at Castle Combe and we, er, travelled to the venue in his Bedford Dormobile. At various times during the meeting there were a series of "fry-ups" in the back of the Dormobile: before practise; after practise; during the interval; after the last race and so on. Given the opportunity the West Wills Health Authority would undoubtedly have adjudged the decidedly murky head-lining of his van as "highly toxic" but in those far off days an aromatic Dormobile was very much par for the course. Although Tony was not the most prolific spender who ever went racing, he was a most stimulating companion and one of his particular strengths was that he avoided being a "race face" racer unlike most of his rivals with the exception, perhaps, of a certain S.M.B. Hailwood. Tony would lark about right up to the time that Vic Anstice dropped the flag. Happy Days. Happy Racers!

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Rudge 250cc parts most of gearbox. Kick-start and selector, front hub complete bearings. No brake WMI 19" 40 hole. Alloy rim. Used. Amal $^7/_8$ brass carb complete. Wanted 250 Rudge racing parts. Tel: (Uxbridge) 0895-832184.

Kawasaki Z1000 A1/2 parts oil pump £6. Regulator £12. Sump £16. Starter £25. New shim tool £12. Cams £25. Rectifier £15. Kickstart shaft £6. Plus loads more, also Z1000 MKII rear wheel £35. Tel: (0260) 226425.

Boots Goldtop size 9 NEW £20. **Helmet** Jebs glassfibre size 60, good, £18. Leather patrol **Jacket** goldtop size 42, good £20, or £50 the lot. Tel: 02216 6088 evenings & weekends.

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Cossack MT9/10 leading link f/forks & shocks & set sidecar fittings for bike. Also pair exhaust pipes, best offer secures around £85. Tel: 021 786 1840 day/eve (Birmingham).

Suzuki GT380 parts, barrels, bottom end/gearbox, 1 ram air cover, $^3/_4$ of original light unit £60. Tel: (0782) 722097.

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Harley Evolution Sportster high bars £15. Long clutch cable £5. Front brake hose £20. 4 indicators £20. 2 mirrors £14. Dual button seat £60. Triumph T140V genuine dealer. Manual £10. Tel: 051-639 5418.

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Kawasaki Z100 A1/2 paqrts. Sump cover £16. Nearly new shocks £35. Starter motor £25. Oil pump £6. Rectifier £15. Regulator £12. Cams £25. Chrome yokes top £15. Bottom £16. Plus P&P lots more. Tel: (0260) 226425.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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Shy BMW Biker 27, wants quiet, sexy, female pillion for friendship, outings. Must like HM/rock music. Lakes, Dales area preferred. Write with photo if poss. 79 Ashville, Gardens, Pellon, Halifax, West Yorks. Not much dish — plenty laughs.

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Magazines Motor Cycle 1924-67 347 copies £50. Motor cycle mechanics 1959-75 95 copies £25. Bound volume, first six copes Apr-Sept 1959 £15. Motor cycling 1938-61 46 copies £10. Buyer collects. Tel: 0323 761955 (Eastbourne, East Sussex).

Pitman's Books Ariel Velo singles, BSA instruction manuals 46-55, singles AY-A10, rocket Royal Enfield instruction manuals. Bullets clippers works replicas £5 each. Haynes manual 750 Honda £1. 28mm concentric £12. T140 forks £50. Tel: 0963 21236.

WANTED

Manx Replica Petrol/Oil Tanks. Norton R/Holders, Triumph one piece crank, dynamo, splayed carb 9/stud head, G/box, Lucas red, lable race — Mag. 4 L/S F/brake. Amal concentrics and any B/Bearing P/Unit engine parts. Tel: Dan 01-540 0634.

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Triumph Trident and BSA rocket three's wanted in unrestructured condition. Non runners basket cases and parts also considered by genuine private nethusiast for prices paid. Travel anywhere. Tel: Tim 01-776 0451 anytime.

Wanted: Norton Commando Interstate petrol rank and side panels to fit Mark III. Tel: Matt 01-658 6968 eveings & weekends.

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16H Norton Bits any rigid frame parts. Cotter bolt for girder forks pinch assembly swap Pitmans book of Ariel. Fair condition for book of Norton any 16H parts welcome. Tel: Graham, Basildon 293166 (evenings).

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Triumph 1923 1936 any condition, but must be complete and authentic with documentation. Write: Dan Friend, 499 Cranes Roost Blvd, Suite No. 10, Altamonte Springs, FLA 32701, U.S.A.

Aermacchi for racing use complete bike or any parts. To help rebuild. Tel: 01-337 2426.

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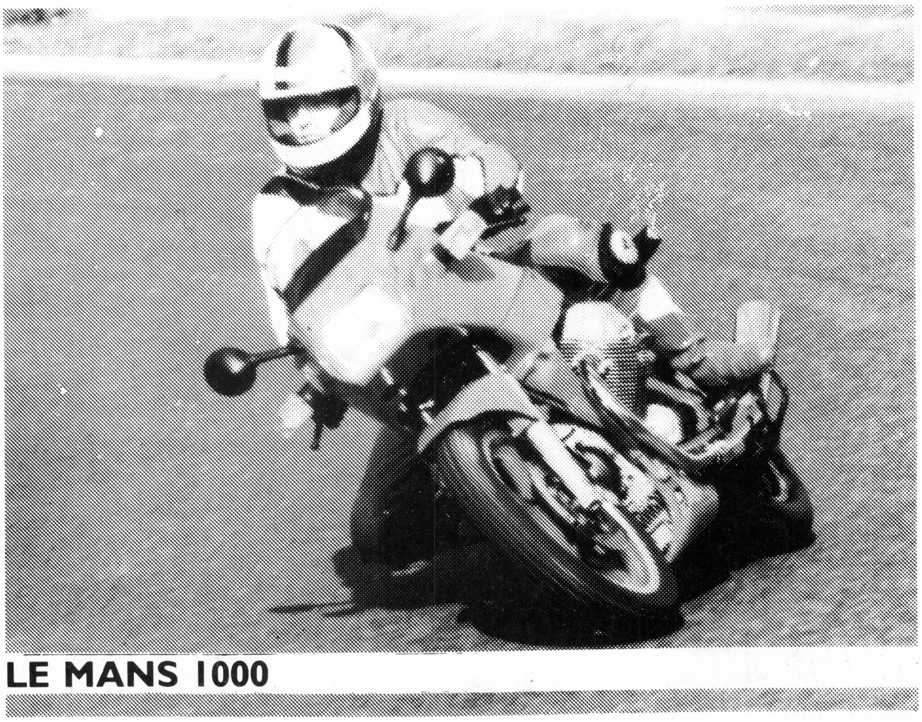

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18-33

SCALEFOUR NEWS

No 104
SEPT
1997

SCALEFORUM 1997 ISSUE

IN THIS ISSUE:

Scaleforum 1997 Guide - Couplings (Prototype & Model) - DCC Control - Joe's Jottings in retrospective mood - Scannell on Cardan Shafts - Use of Clear Decal Sheet for Lining and Insignia - Prototype Fidelity Part 2 . . . and more, with all the regular features.

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As have most concerns of consequence, the Society now has an Internet 'World Wide Web' Site, to be found at: http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/town/estate/nr49/

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SOCIETY NOTICES

INCLUDED WITH THIS MAILING

Copies of this issue mailed to Members should be accompanied by: **Alphabetical List of Members (No 4), a 'Paper' relating to the 'Going Limited' process and a 'Bring & Buy' Form for use at Scaleforum '97.**

Should any item be missing please contact the Production Editor.

CORRESPONDENCE TO THE EDITORS.

It would be much appreciated if the words 'Scalefour News' or 'Scalefour Society' are included in the envelope address in all communications, relating to Society matters, mailed to either editor.

This is to facilitate arrangements for re-direction of mail to the other when either one is away from home for a length of time, and thus avoiding possible delays.

BLUE SHEET AMENDMENT (ALREADY!)

Kent Area Group (New Group) -
Organiser -
Roderic Cameron,
(Tel & Fax) 01622-859848
The Warren, Nr. Lenham, Kent,
ME17 2ED
See AG Report on p.20 for more details of the Group.

Wealden Area Group -

Organiser Martin Marrison has moved to:
38 Pasture Hill Road, Haywards
Heath, West Sussex,RH16 1LX
Tel: 01444-450941

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS and CORRESPONDENCE

Please note that all membership related correspondence, including renewals, is to be sent to Membership Secretary Brian Pearce and NOT to the Treasurer. If you have a renewal form yet to use please amend the address accordingly. Overseas members with e-mail facilities can advise changes of address, etc., via the Production Editor at the address shown in the left-hand column of this page.

ADVANCE APOLOGY

Usually issues of *Scalefour News* benefit from the eagle eye of Lynden Emery in finding spelling and typographical errors at the final proof reading stage before going to print. Unfortunately that hasn't proved possible, for various reasons of timing and availability, for this issue. As a result, responsibility for any such *errata* that have escaped my (or my wife's) notice, or that of local Group colleague Joe Newman, who also casts an eye over a proof copy, rests solely with me. *David Lane*

Member's Market Place Advertisements

Hitherto I have assumed that one insertion for such items suffices, but if members wish an 'ad' to be re-published would they please advise me. Such 'ads' are also placed on the Internet Web Site 'News' Page so early advice of desired deletion upon a successful transaction should be provided to me so that the 'ad' concerned may be removed when the site ia updated. *David Lane*

On the Cover:

A view from the balcony of the main exhibition hall at Scaleforum 1996

Photo: David Lane

GENERAL INFORMATION

Communications:
1. Advices of factual corrections and/or amendments to material appearing in *Scalefour News*, and details of amendments concerning names, addresses and telephone numbers appearing on the 'Blue Sheet' should be addressed to David Lane, (Production Editor) (address above).
2. Notice of alterations or amendments to individual members' addresses should be addressed to the Membership Secretary, Brian Pearce (address above).
3. Details of events for inclusion in the Diary should be addressed to the Production Editor, David Lane (Address above).
4. All other correspondence regarding *Scalefour News*, including letters for publication, and submitted copy, to be addressed to the Editor, Lynden Emery, (address above), but e-mail to be sent to David Lane (address above).

Technical Symbols — Will contributors please note that the nature of technical symbols to be reproduced in articles or letters should be made quite clear in original copy, to avoid production difficulties.

Inserts to accompany *Scalefour News* — ALL printing arrangements should be made through the Production Editor - if in exceptional circumstances local printing is essential there must be liaison with the Production Editor in advance.

OPINIONS EXPRESSED: It should be borne in mind that opinions expressed in *Scalefour News* under the byline of names also involved officially in the Society are, unless otherwise clearly apparent, personal opinions only and should not be taken to reflect any official Society policy.

SCALEFOUR NEWS is edited by Lynden Emery, designed, set and produced by
David Lane and printed by Salisbury Printing Company Ltd.

SCALEFOUR NEWS No 104

Editorial

Scaleforum is the Scalefour Society's major event of the year, when a very significant proportion of the membership home in on Leatherhead from all over Britain and many from distant parts of the world, meeting each other and also welcoming members of the public to savour a large sample of the best in 4mm finescale model railways. The Scaleforum Guide in the centre of this issue of *Scalefour News* gives the details of layouts, demonstrations, lectures, traders, Scalefour Stores, Bring and Buy, and so on. For first-time visitors, the Competitions may require more time than they might expect, especially the Deputy Chairman's Cup, which requires the careful driving of an 18.83mm gauge locomotive over a layout best described as an obstacle course, as well as being weighed and having its drawbar pull measured in public.

The DCC provides the link to the contents of this issue of *Scalefour News*, where Derek Genzel concludes his interesting examination of aspects of the aforementioned competition and their relationship with everyday running of locomotives - which the competition is ultimately intended to aid. In terms of Competitions, that is by no means all. The accolade of winning the Chairman's Cup is a target surely to be aimed for, and hopefully many entries will be present on the Saturday to make life difficult for the judges. Returning to the content of this issue, Tony Darrah takes a look at Digital Command Control (another DCC!), now maturing as a reliable means of operation for model railways with possibilities way beyond stop/go/reverse/change speed, and a distinct advantage for the perennial problem of electrical pickup - there is constant full-voltage supply to all tracks. Joe's Jottings are all about a magazine which must have had an important influence on the early development of a significant proportion of today's modellers, but will be quite unknown to most under the age of forty - what is there today which has such a pervasive effect on youngsters as did the *Meccano Magazine*, giving them an insight and basic instruction in engineering ideas? Food for thought!

I enjoy reading the Area Group reports, as they show that there is activity taking place where individuals come together to talk, plan, make models, and learn from each other - and the amount of sheer common sense and skill that appear from within these groups, both large and small, is remarkable. The letters allow individuals to ask for and give advice, blow off steam, fly kites: amusing, irritating, stimulating, informative, opinionated, but never bland - keep them coming!

Lynden Emery 2390

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S ARMCHAIR

Where did your Summer go? It was a Summer of mixed blessing and weather. Sometimes hot, sometimes wet. Reflecting on Summers past I would think that this year has been something of an 'Average', and quite akin to the Summers we were used to as kids. We remember the warm days and perhaps slide the not-so-good days into deeper recesses of the memory. The smell of creosote brings back to me scenes beside the tracks with the sun warming out the same evocative perfume, and of the rust brown shades of the track and ballast, deeply studied between the passing of the trains.

Not wanting to put an end to a very pleasant period of the year, the mellow fruitfulness of Scaleforum is again upon us, rising from the gentle mists of the Leatherhead Leisure complex. For all the non-member visitors that are reading the 'News' for the first time, I hope that you have enjoyed the visit and are now to be considered as members of our 'Merrie Band'. To the members visiting the Show, can I say "have a good time and I look forward to having a chat with you on either of the days. Visitor and member alike, please have an entertaining and enjoyable day.

Mike Peascod 1009

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12 Scalefour North + Bring & Buy + Digest on Disk
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Comment from the Production Editor

I have the impression that the content of Page 2 of this Journal appears to be possibly overlooked by some readers as being of purely academic interest since much of its content usually remains unchanged. However, it is a 'Noticeboard' and the vehicle for what could, on occasion, be items of importance - so please cast an eye over it, just in case you may be concerned. Also it carries the addresses of the Society officers most likely to be needed by members - convenient when you cannot find your 'Blue Sheet'! On another subject - items for the Diary and Members Market Place can usually be fitted in for a couple of weeks after the published closing date, if sent, as they should be, direct to me - but articles, Area Group reports,letters and all other items should comply with the published date and go to Lynden Emery.

Now, to don my other, rather authoritative sounding, title of 'Webmaster', may I draw the attention of members, who have access to the medium, to the fact that a regularly updated Stores List can now be accessed on the Internet, fuller details being available on p.21. *David Lane 4719*

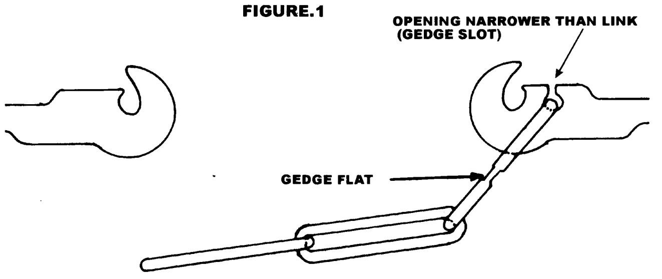
COUPLINGS - AN ATTACHMENT

By Michael Trower 5290

The article by Ted Scannell on couplings provided a brief insight in to a very vital and neglected aspect of railways, both full size and model. Most people interested in railways, real or replica, concentrate on the trains running thereon. A train may consist by rulebook definition of one vehicle, but most, obviously, consist of more, so some means of joining them is needed and Mr Scannell concentrated on the most basic and earliest in origin, i.e., a chain and its derivatives. Model catalogues list many varied types of buffers for most companies but couplings are viewed as either three-link or screw and not looked into any further.

Many very early couplings, in fact, consisted of five links, and also on passenger-rated vehicles side safety chains were fitted between vehicles to hold the train together should the main coupling break, thus hopefully avoiding a runaway, which was all too common in earlier times. More details are provided in the book *British Goods Wagons* by Essery, Rowland and Steel (1970) p17 (General Review). In the early 1900s the RCH issued standards for buffer and coupling lengths. The distance from buffer face to headstock face was 1' 6" for unfitted wagons and 1' 8$^{1}/_{2}$” for fitted, and screw couplings, when fully extended, on fitted wagons was 2' 11". The Instanter coupling was introduced in 1908 by the GWR to enable a degree of adjustment in length without the expense and effort of fitting screw couplings. When working in fitted trains, i.e. with continuous brakes operative in all or part of the train, the buffers should be in contact to prevent surges, and the Instanter in the short position does this. Its advantage was that it could be adjusted by a shunter with a pole without the need to be between the vehicles, unlike the screw coupling. *A History of GWR Good Wagons V*ol 1 gives a table of dimensions for GW three-link and Instanter couplings.

FIGURE.1



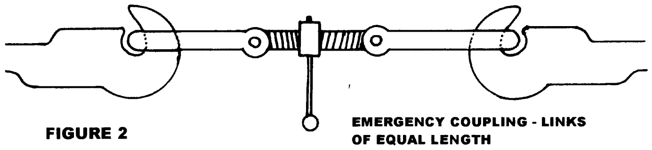


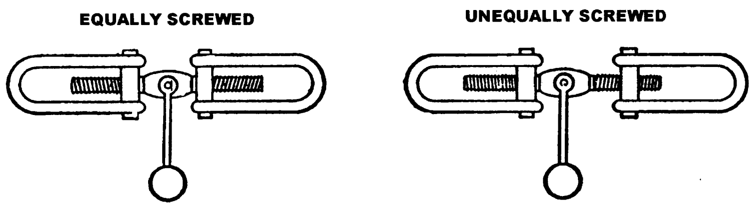
FIGURE 2

EMERGENCY COUPLING - LINKS OF EQUAL LENGTH

On the coupling hook the coupling link is retained by the opening being narrower than the thickness of the link. How then is it fitted you ask? It is by means of a flat section of the link known as a gedge flat so the link can pass through the slot and be retained on the vehicle. See Figure 1.

One fact not shown in the drawings of Ted Scannell is that the links (sometimes known as D links) of a screw coupling are usually of unequal length, to account for the end attached to the drawhook, so on his drawings 3, 4 and 6 the top link would be longer, as the end attached to vehicle is obviously nearer the headstock, as it is further back on the coupling hook in the retaining slot. On drawings 5, 6 and 7, the flat links would be correspondingly longer than the bottom round link - logical if thought about, but who does? The only ones of equal length are the spare couplings carried in the brakevans of trains for emergency use which hook on both coupling hooks, not being captive to any one vehicle. See Figure 2.

FIGURE 3.


EQUALLY SCREWED

UNEQUALLY SCREWED

So having sorted that out, you have two vehicles to be coupled, so one end of the coupling goes over the hook of the other vehicles - simple, really, or is it?

[The Railway Regulations state:]

When coupling a loco to coaching stock or fitted vehicles, the loco coupling must be used.

If the loco is fitted with Buckeye_[drophead*]_ couplings the vehicle's coupling must be used.

When coupling a loco to an unfitted vehicle, the vehicle's coupling must be used.

When a non-bogie vehicle fitted with screw couplings is formed in a passenger train next to a bogie vehicle the screw coupling of the non-bogie vehicle must always be used.

When a vehicle fitted with a continental screw coupling [(i.e., link and pin type) Ted's diagrams 5,7 and 8] is to be coupled to a vehicle with a BR screw, Instanter or three-link, the Continental screw coupling must be used.

An equal amount of screw must project through the nut at each end. If the coupling is found to be unequally screwed it must be equalised before the coupling operation is commenced. See Figure 3.

So having sorted that out, what order do you do it in - order I hear you say? Yes, there is an order to do this - remember you are between two railway vehicles, the most dangerous place you could be. So you couple the vehicle coupling, then the heating connection, then lighting cables, then the brake pipes and exit quickly, thus leaving the brakes till last ensuring the train cannot move whilst you are under it. To uncouple, the opposite is done, brake pipes first ensuring no movement is possible, light and heat cables, coupling, then place the vacuum brake pipes on their dummy connections or close air brake cocks as appropriate and exit from between vehicles.

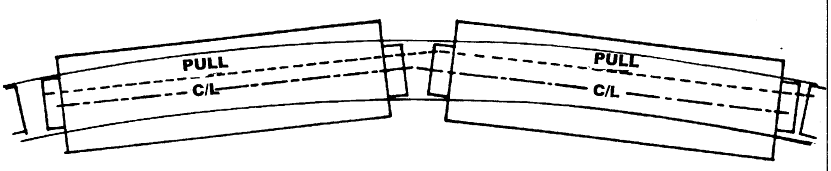
The above cover the greater proportion of couplings in use during the kettle era with the exception of the Buckeye automatic coupler as found on some coaching stock. These are also known as knuckle couplers and are based on the coupling invented in America by Eli H Janney, around 1880 I believe, and sometimes known as the Master Car Builders or MCB type, and available in model form as the Kadee coupler. These were adopted for coaching stock by the Southern and LNE Railways, together with the Pullman gangway connection, and later became BR (remember them) standard. Generally, locomotive-to-train coupling was still with screw couplings, the only steam locos being Buckeye fitted were corridor tender A3s and A4s of the LNER, no Southern locomotives being so equipped. Diesels and Electric with Buckeye couplings were 33/1s, 73 and 74 and now 89, 90 and 91 also. The GWR and LMS used the screw coupling and so called British Standard Gangway connection which were also used on most BR DMUs except Swindon-built Intercity units, Transpennine units and all SR DEMUs. The two types of gangway could only couple with the use of special adapter plates which commanded a page or two in the appropriate rule books and general appendices, so Big Four modellers should take care in forming inter-regional trains. The Buckeye coupler, due to its complex operating procedures, always warranted a section of its own in all railway rule books.

As an aside at an exhibition recently I saw someone trying to couple two Kadee-equipped coaches together on a curve without success - I advised him to do it on straight track, as even the real ones do not couple well or at all on curves, a fact of which he was totally unaware.

Having thus digested the aforementioned prototype theory, how does this then translate into the miniature world that concerns us? The answer is with mixed results I'm afraid, both in the mechanics of operating, and especially in the aesthetics.

If you consider the real thing, the drawbar is situated in the middle of the headstock (ie at the centreline of the vehicle) and attached to the vehicle at a standard height. The drawbar pull is, therefore, on the vehicles' centreline at a set height. With very few notable exceptions such as class 40, 44, 45, 46, and 76, bogie-mounted couplings are unknown. I was brought up on Hornby Dublo which had a form of Buckeye which provided a central pull on all vehicles and also absorbed buffing forces during propelling, and had the benefit of being able to lift vehicles cleanly from a train, which is useful for younger hands. A friend had a Triang set with its tension locks in which each coupling has an offset hook for haulage - fine when on straight track as both hooks provide a pull, but on a curve the outer hook of the pair then provides the only route for the drawgear forces, thus decentralising the pull instantly. See Figure 4.

FIGURE 4.



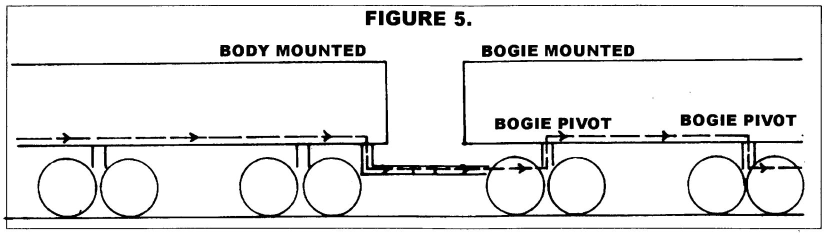
To younger hands they are also a great deal more difficult to uncouple, as one wagon must be twisted to satisfactorily uncouple them, and then of necessity rerailed, and also preventing wagons being lifted out cleanly from the train.

Two incidents show to my mind the advantages of the Hornby Dublo type. When my 'Cardiff Castle' was trying to emulate 'Mallard' at a scale 150 mph on a 15" radius curve, it uncoupled from its train, slid off the baseboard and dropped onto the carpet, the layout being at ground level. The coaches stayed on the rails, satisfactorily negotiated the curve and gracefully came to a halt. However, a derailment on my friend's raised level layout resulted in the whole train following the loco 3 feet to the floor whilst tension locked together!

However, Binns Road was murdered by Margate, so all other firms had to adopt some form of tension-lock to enable coupling to occur with the winner. But as we have seen all seem to be of different dimensions so resulting in off-centre pulling forces, besides uncoupling difficulties, and hence, causing running problems. Possibly the neatest was the original Airfix GMR one which had the hooks virtually central, but it lacked a retaining lip (unlike the others) and was prone to unwanted uncoupling.

A debate which occurs periodically in the US model magazines is that of body versus truck-mounted couplers, especially in N gauge. When under tension in pull mode there is not too much to differentiate between them, but problems occur when propelling. There is always sideplay in any coupling, and with the forces also having to contend with swivelling bogies. This can result in the bogies taking up odd and conflicting angles, especially through point work and reverse curves, thus resulting in derailments with the truck-mounted version. The problem is also aggravated by the drawbar forces, under propulsion, being routed through changes in level as shown below, so truck-mounted couplers are best avoided if at all possible in all gauges. See Figure 5.

FIGURE 5.



The model form of screw/three link and buffers would at least have something to recommend it, as far as drawbar pull forces go. The Alex Jackson is not far behind as pulling forces are at one level, and the coupling is body-mounted and the buffing forces are also at a constant level and both forces are not usually needed at the same time. The Kadee type provides a central pull at a standard height and has the benefit of magnetic uncoupling, with one magnet being able to serve a yard of fan of sidings much like the Alex Jackson.

Indeed the *Digest* Sheets 42.6.1 on Alex Jackson couplings have many salient points equally applicable to, and found in, Kadee instructions. I have no personal experience of Sprat & Winkle couplings but they do seem slightly more obtrusive and also need a bar between the buffers for operation. In principle they are a tension lock but with a downward motion to the hook, as opposed to the upward one for Triang et al. The HD/ Simplex has already been covered and the continental types are not normally found in 4mm modelling anyway.

My personal view is that some form of automatic coupling/uncoupling is preferable to the great hand from the sky during shunting operations particularly at exhibitions where our hobby is under public scrutiny, and especially in the smaller (less than 7mm) scales. I feel poor shunting/ coupling is second only to poor running and derailments at exhibitions and instantly lowers the tone of a layout and its inherent authenticity of operating practices. As a newcomer to P4, I would welcome contact from any members who have used Kadee couplers in P4, as I am considering this option.

Diverting back to the prototype again, shunting was not a leisurely Sunday afternoon occupation of railwaymen with nothing better to do, as is often seen on layouts, but it was their job and part of a commercial process to be done as economically as possible. Bear in mind a shunter has to walk between every coupling/uncoupling and points change, and every change of direction involves the Driver winding the reversing gear all the way. The best shunting sequence should involve the fewest moves in the shortest time - would you shunt Waterloo station in the order of Platforms 1, 24, 6, 18 and 3 if you had to walk between them all and change the points? I doubt it.

I hope this article has provided some food for thought in a very infrequently considered area of model and real railways operating and that it may inspire modellers in that quest for authenticity and prototypical operation.

**Locomotive buckeye couplings almost without exception can be dropped by removing a retaining pin, to hang vertically to expose a conventional coupling hook*

A Journey in the Quest for Prototype Fidelity - Tickover to Takeoff?

Tony Darrah 1116

How nice of Ted Scannell to remember the short article of mine he quotes in *Scalefour News* 103 p22, I must admit I had forgotten it, and to refresh my memory I had to unearth my 1975 volume of *Model Railways* (which year I re-read fully once more - wasn't it a vintage period for the magazine at that time?). I can see Ted's ideas are very workable, but I venture to suggest another answer, and this can be a solution to his other article on pp.9-11 of the same issue of *Scalefour News*. But first let me digress a bit.

I am currently in the early stages of building a new layout, and have been considering how to use many of the ideas for layout building evolved over the last ten years, both in the UK and elsewhere. One of my interests is the application of electronics to modelling, which is more noticeable in the USA than here. For example, *Model Railroader* runs a regular series on electronics and computing as related to the hobby. I have been watching the development of DCC (not the Deputy Chairman's Cup - but Digital Command Control) - for which the NMRA (National Model Railroad Association) have drawn up standards and strict conformance testing of the various commercial systems. For those of you who do not know what DCC is (in this context), it is a form of electronic control whereby the track is constantly powered with low voltage AC, and digital signals are sent from a controller via the track to decoder chips in the locomotive or accessory. The signals are decoded in the loco, the current is rectified if necessary and then sent on to the motor or accessory etc. There are several systems on the market now, and a DIY project was published in several recent issues of *Model Railroader* (which is now on sale in W H Smith - and gets in at least a week before my subscription copy comes!). I have had several DCC systems demonstrated to me, and was attracted to the simplicity of installing such a system. Wiring the layout is simple - basically a two wire bus around the layout with feeds to the track at intervals to prevent undue voltage drop. Several locos, usually about 16-17 (and up to 1000 accessories) can be controlled at one time, with up to 80 other locos idle on the tracks! Some very sophisticated control parameters can be set up, not just for the controller but different ones for each loco. This means you can fine tune each loco individually to get the best performance from it - and, because of the decoder fitted in the loco, it remembers the settings. One other advantage is that you can still use the locos on conventional controllers. Another is that at least one visiting loco can be run without a decoder, and before decoders are fitted in your own locos, you can usually run several at a time off the controller on pure DC control.

I was converted to the idea of eventually purchasing a DCC system for the new layout. When, as a benefit of membership of MERG (Model Electronic Railway Group) there was a tempting discount offer for the home grown ZTC system, I plucked up courage and made an initial purchase - and have been evaluating it for the last few weeks. I'm hooked. If you remember the Hornby Zero-1 system, there is a link, but this system is much more sophisticated, more reliable and much, much more versatile. As I said earlier, there are several makes on the market, but the signals are standardised and so all the decoder chips should work with each maker's controllers.

The NMRA have designed a rectangular logo (above) which systems built to be compatible with their standards can use. This doesn't actually mean they conform to those standards, and only those products which have been conformance tested by the NMRA can use the oval 'NMRA Conforming' logo

As with most electronic gadgets around the home you can add to the system bit by bit, but to start with you will need a transformer giving 12-17volts AC at up to 5amps, and a command station (controller). This is the minimum, and you can then run several locos on DC. However, to get the full benefits a decoder chip to fit in each locomotive is needed. Each loco chip is assigned a number by the command centre (controller) - usually the last two figures of the loco number. Each chip can be programmed with a range of variable parameters to enable the loco's motor to run at its optimum. The controller can also be used to set inertia. Double heading is easy, as two or more decoder equipped locos can be coupled together as a 'consist' , and all controlled as one loco. If you have two motor bogies in a diesel you can have a chip for each motor, and program one to give wheel slip as the diesel starts.

I have been fascinated controlling a Class 44 Peak, programmed as a heavy loco, and trying to stop it precisely. It takes a lot of care and is almost like driving the real thing! The momentum can be very realistic - giving the impression of a stately machine - but if you don't like it you can easily reset it to a value you can cope with. You can alter the programming to pretend you have a heavy, light or medium weight train behind the loco. For starting, a loco can be programmed so that it responds at the slightest movement of the controls, but with the inertia you want. I have set my 08 shunter for a total speed range of 20 m.p.h. so that I have the whole of the regulator movement for that range. The ease of controlling the slow speed is beautiful.

The instructions for setting up seem complex at first, but as you work through them they become very understandable. Because the system is a dedicated computer system, with all the software written for you, there is no need to learn how to write a program as Ted Scannell has with his Sinclair Spectrum. I have found that DCC will do what he wants and more.

The decoders available now will cope with motors drawing currents from 1 Amp to 5 Amps. They vary in size from 12x27x7mm to 100x35x9mm. The smallest ones should fit into most 4mm locos with ease - they are planned to fit in N gauge! However the smallest 4-wire decoders only have the basic loco speed/inertia/ momentum etc. functions. If you want the extra functions, like light controls or coupler controls, then a slightly larger 8-wire decoder is needed.

With the extra functions available you can program directional and constant brightness loco lighting (for diesels only I should think - but I have seen US circuits for flickering fireboxes). There are possibilities for running an idler motor as well, quite independently from the driving motor. And a thought, - how about an Alec Jackson on each end of a loco that you can uncouple remotely anywhere you wish?

Because there is a constant voltage supply on the track, then you could arrange constant coach lighting, or with reed relays and magnets (to save a separate train decoder) you could arrange for the lighting to go on and off at tunnels. If you wish, you can control all your points and signals from the command centre, using accessory decoders. It is possible to set routes with one preset button, by using the facility to program macros , as you can on any half way decent modern computer program.

Current DCC manufacturers include: In the USA -

Digitrax, North Coast Engineering, Wangrow Electronics.

In Germany - Lehmann, Arnold, Lenz Electronic, Roco, Trix.

In UK - ZTC Systems (advertises in most UK model railway magazines)

A comprehensive DIY DCC system was featured in *Model Railroader* February to July 1997. I think Victor's may have back issues, but the publishers can usually supply if not.

If you're into the net the NMRA run a net site for DCC

http://www.mcs.net/~dsdawdy/NMRA/dcc.html

I believe that a very helpful supplier (Loys Toys, POBox 32,La Mirada, CA 90637 USA) in the US provide a 68 page DCC 'Info' catalog for $1 US & Canada or $3 other countries. Website

http://www.mcetech.com/loystoys

Some other useful addresses:

Wangrow Electronics Inc., POBox 98-A, Park Ridge, IL 60068-0098 (USA) Internet:

http://www.wangrow.com

Email: systemone@wangrow.com

North Coast Engineering,1900 Empire Blvd, Suite 303, Webster, NY 14580 (USA)
http://www.tttrains.com/northcoast

Digitrax, POBox 1424, Norcross, GA 30091 (USA)

http://www.digitrax.com

ZTC Systems, POBox 23, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 2XY (UK)
Tel: 01799 599800

References

Apart from the *Model Railroader* articles mentioned above, the following are useful: *Model Railroader* June 1993 p104; July 1993 p88; October 1993 p65 & 104 November 1994 p32; January 1995 p64

Railroad Model Craftsman - November 1993 p134; January 1995 pp 107 & 119; November 1995 p82; July 1996 p76 & 82,Oct 1996 p71.

MEMBERS MARKET PLACE

Wanted.

A copy of Volume 12 of the RCTS GWR Locomotives series. Offers please to John Milford, (4385) 'Saxby', Cecil Avenue, Salisbury, Wilts., SP2 8EE, Tel: 01722-330255.

MEMBERS MARKET PLACE

Wanted

An instruction sheet for a 1977 Scalefour Society bogie vehicle compensation unit for a 9 foot vehicle. The serial number on the etch is CCU 108. This is required by member Michael Moran in Australia - to speed contact please contact David Lane in the first instance- see P2 for contact details.

Joe's Jottings 23

By Joe Brook Smith 1023

At the tail end of my Jottings in *Scalefour News* 100 I mentioned that the 21st September 1996 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the death of Frank Hornby, the inventor of Meccano and Hornby Trains. Having been a dedicated enthusiast of those products in pre-war days I was stricken with nostalgia after typing that simple statement, whereupon I decided to enlarge upon it for the benefit of those born too late to have experienced the great pleasure we gained from the fantasy world of Hornby Trains.

Frank Hornby was born in Liverpool and worked for a firm of importers, but in his spare time he invented the versatile constructional toy in order to overcome the constant need to produce new toys to entertain his eldest son Roland. The invention was patented in 1901 as 'Mechanics Made Easy', a mouthful of a name which was simplified to 'Meccano' in 1907. The small business expanded and eventually Hornby took the bold step of buying a plot of land in the Old Swan district of Liverpool, upon which the world famous Binns Road factory was opened in 1914. During the First World War the factory was extensively committed to war work. Hornby Trains initially came in 1920 as an extension of the Meccano constructional toy concept, but this was replaced in 1925 when the factory tooled up for model train production assisted by the Metal Box Company which became the main source of lithographed tin printing for the Meccano products. Also in 1925 Hornby introduced his first electric set, the Metropolitan loco and suburban coaches, advertised as 'The Latest Hornby Thrill'! That it could well have been - it was powered from the 240 volt domestic mains supply with just a 60 watt lamp in series as a dropper resistance!

My own introduction to Hornby Trains came in the mid-twenties following a 'probationary' period with cheap Brimtoy sets which had been cared for. My father was no railway enthusiast as I was given a Midland 0-4-0 clockwork loco with an LNWR tender, a four wheel coach with opening doors, a N.E open wagon and a side tipping truck, together with an oval of one foot radius track mounted on a board. This had been purchased from the Doll's Hospital at Stratford, the nearest appointed Hornby dealer at the time, when dealerships were strictly selected. In those depressed times one only expected additions at birthdays and Christmas times but, as I got older, my stock also increased through schoolboy swaps and pocket money bargains. There were no such thing as boot fairs in those days.

Frank Hornby did not set out to compete with the established model railway firms such as Bassett-Lowke, Leeds Model Co, Bonds, etc., but sold his products as toys appealing to schoolboys and youths. Meccano Limited, the parent company, didn't go in for media advertising except at Christmas times but instead launched a brilliant public relations and publicity exercise when the monthly *Meccano Magazine* was introduced in 1916. This was an educational journal which was enjoyed and respected by readers of all ages. The author Ellson Hawkes was the editor for many years and amongst the many contributors until publication sadly ceased in the 'sixties was a young O.S Nock, who, from 1936, wrote about ships, aeroplanes, cars and general engineering subjects, also under the pseudonym 'A Railway Engineer'. Feature articles dealt with a wide range of subjects, often topical but especially those relevant to the themes of the Meccano products which in the 'thirties included railways, aeroplanes, cars, boats, chemistry, basic electrics and even conjuring sets. New products were reviewed in the *Meccano Magazine*, and other sections such as 'How to get more fun from Hornby Trains' showed amongst other things how one could emulate full-scale practices on one's own layout. *Meccano Magazine* must have had a vast library of Hornby posed photos, many of which appeared over the years bearing different captions to depict working practices. Illustrated instructions were also included for Meccano reproductions of engineering mechanisms, car differentials and gearboxes, steam engine governors and the like - all good promotional copy.

Frank Hornby set up the Meccano Guild and, later, the Hornby Railway Company, as world-wide organisations rather like our own Area Groups, with branches often based in schools and church organisations, and their activities were reported in the *Meccano Magazine*. I was a member of the H.R.C and took the *Meccano Magazine* continuously from 1932 to 1946. The knowledge gained from the magazine was invaluable when I entered the Instrument and Engineering industries.

Its a great pity that there is now no comparable magazine that could encourage youngsters to become interested in railways and railway modelling and to take an interest in technical matters. Surely there must be more out there who would like more from their leisure time than kicking a ball around or staring at moving images on an expensive computer screen. That's a point worthy of careful consideration.

In retrospect the success of Hornby 'O' gauge trains was quite remarkable. The main range of locos was built entirely on two types of four-coupled mechanisms in both clockwork and electric. The smaller one was used under nondescript standard bodies painted in the liveries of the four grouping companies and the larger more powerful version with larger removable wheels was used under the more expensive nondescript bodies. Even the earlier top of the range locos bore no resemblance to the four top prototype names which they carried. The No.1 Special 0-4-0 and tender locos and the No.2 Special 4-4-2 tank and tender locos used the larger mechanisms under what one could kindly refer to as 'free-lance' bodies. This improved in 1929 when four new semi-scale bodies and tenders were introduced for the No.2 Special range of 4-4-0 locos. These had some semblance to the prototype designs found of the four grouping companies. Things got a little better in 1937 when Hornby introduced their 'True-to-type' model of the SR 'Schools' Class loco 'Eton', using the same large four-coupled mechanism. Later in the same year Hornby produced their finest model, the electric only 'Princess Elizabeth' loco, which was priced at five guineas (£5.25 in today's currency), a decent middle-class weekly-wage at that time. This loco had a completely new six-coupled mechanism which required the three foot radius curves of the new solid steel track which complemented the loco.

This was to be the last major development in the Hornby 'O' gauge range. During the Second World War Binns Road again made its contribution to the war effort. Afterwards 'O' Gauge was drastically cut back to the small wheeled locos, a minimum of four wheeled rolling stock and the one foot radius track - all petering out in the early 'sixties. Sadly the original Meccano company itself petered out, being humiliatingly bought out in 1964 by its one-time rival, Lines Brothers, the owners of the Triang Group, which, in turn, succumbed in 1971.

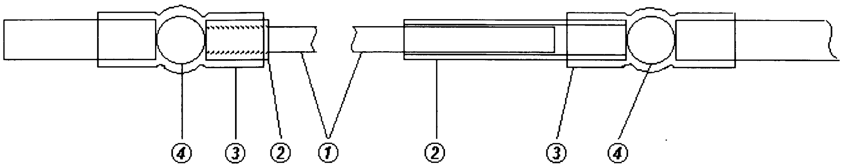
In recent years I gave watched many Hornby 'O' gauge exhibition layouts, trying to reconcile their clattering wobbling trains tail-chasing around the tinplate trackwork with the thrill I obviously experienced watching similar sights in my pre-war youth at Gamages of Holborn, the self-styled National Headquarters for Meccano and Hornby Trains. Amazingly the feeling still persists; just speak to the exhibitors and onlookers and you will be charged with the same enthusiasm. In my conversations with ex-employees of Meccano Limited (one started in 1920) I sensed the same strong feelings of loyalty to the company and its history as do the members of the Hornby Collectors Association.

My Gauge 'O' days ended abruptly on the third night of the London Blitz when my parents and I were blasted out of house and home. That experience completely changed my life and hobbies but I am still pleased to remember Frank Hornby and the fantasy world which he helped to create for my generation. He used to say that he had a million boy friends, and one cannot help feeling that he was right.

Discoveries Along The Way - Cardan Shafts

By Ted Scannell 2769

I am fundamentally lazy. Bone idle, in fact. According to my mother I woke, during the first six months of my life, only to yell for food. I would then doze off again during the repast to indicate my complements to the chef.



With such a background then, my reaction to the idea of finishing, fitting and fettling the four universal joints (eight ends!) in the drive train of the MOK Class 47 that I am in the process of assembling could hardly be expected to be positive. Especially after Monty Wells' review suggested that they may be the source of some of the noise in his example.

Somehow through the mists of time a memory solidified out that silicone rubber tube can be used for flexible drives. The chances of these being noisy were slim, so off into my unknown I slouched.

The drive shafts in the '47' are 3/32 in. so 1.5 mm bore silicone fuel pipe is a good fit. But in order for it to bend freely at the knuckle, (tubes don't like to bend, as a rule) it is necessary to distort the tubing with a ball bearing of a greater diameter than that of the shaft. These circular creases allow the tubing to deform without resistance, and the driven angle to change without longitudinal friction between the shafts and the sleeve as would be the case if the tube remained parallel. Balls from a bicycle bearing, 1/8 in. or 3 mm., work fine.

Actually the entire assembly worked better than I had dare imagine; totally silent, no slip, quick to make, and most important if you know me, . . . cheap.

One other advantage which has been pointed out since is the fact that these are Constant Velocity (C.V.) Joints, meaning that the output shaft rotates at a constant speed (provided the input does of course) rather than accelerating and decelerating during each revolution as is the case with pinned universals. The only disadvantage (?) is the lack of end float. There is actually a little movement in tension, but none at all in compression. Though no problem as far as the '47' drive is concerned, there is another model in the pipeline which will need a cardan shaft or two where the length may not be constant.

Never being slow to plagiarise another's good idea, the recent *Railway Modeller* article on tram chassis* was seized upon and adapted to suit. Using square section brass tube of two sizes to form the splined part of the cardan shaft may not be original, but it was to me, and embarrassingly obvious to boot.

The brass section I used was 1/16 in. and 3/32 in. square, the larger being the same tight fit in the silicone tubing as the shaft of the same diameter. I made two at once by sliding a 12 mm length of the larger over the centre of a double length of the smaller, flooding with solder and then cutting in half. The outers are cut to length and stuffed straight into the silicone tube.

1. 1/16 in.Square section brass tube. K&S Metalcentres,in most model shops.
2. 3/32 in. Ditto ditto.
3. 1/16 in.(1.5 mm) bore Silicone rubber tube Fuel pipe for small i.c. aero engines. Model shops.
4. 1/8 in. Ball bearings Halfords, or your local bike shop.

Total cost; under 50 pence per cardan shaft, total time; under 30 minutes for the pair, excluding shopping.

*Working London Trams by David Glover - *Railway Modeller, June 1997.*

OPPORTUNITY CALLS

A vacancy exists in the Society's Management team, possibly only for one or, maybe, two years, for a volunteer to perform the duties of Auditor of the Society's accounts initially specifically for the Financial Year 1997-98, subsequent involvement being dependent on the progress of the Society's projected move to incorporated status, which, if executed, would thereafter require the use of a Qualified Auditor.

In the Society's existing form, the Auditor need not be qualified as such, but accounting experience and some basic knowledge of the intricacy of the VAT system would be of value.

This is a position suited to a member, possibly a retired accountant (since the spare time, if any, of the professionally active ones seems to be more than fully occupied) who would like to provide some assistance to the Society but without undertaking a lengthy and continuing commitment. Regrettably the remuneration is non-existent, other than re-imbursement of our-of-pocket expenses incurred.

The Society's Financial Year runs from 1st March to the following 28th/29th February, and it is the year ending 28th February 1998 with which this vacancy is concerned, so involvement will not arise until that time.

Those interested should please make such interest known to the General Secretary, Mike Ainsworth, at his address shown on p.2 , or on the 'Blue Sheet'. DL.

Quicktips 104

From John Green 5260

Have you ever had the problem with driving wheel spacing washers where you find an odd number is just right? "Two is still a bit sloppy but four are too tight". The solution is obvious, use three! The problem is that two on one side and one on the other leaves the wheels spaced slightly off centre. Clearly you cannot see both sides of the chassis at the same time, even from the front it is difficult to detect, but it can lead to problems with such things as splasher clearance. The answer is of course to use four, but thin them down a bit. If you are a bit challenged in the "machine shop practice" department like me, you end up putting the washer on a file or emery cloth flat on the workbench, you place a digit on top and drag the washer up and down (old hands are smirking by now, but don't laugh 'because it works and I am a beginner!). After doing a few suitably thinned washers your digit gets worn away at the end and you are left with a donut of skin with a pink surround and a pink patch in the middle! (Stop tittering!) The solution which dawned one evening is to use a substitute for the digit (slow on the uptake or what).

Here is the tip. Paint brushes have rounded ends to their handles, you can usually find one that is just the right size to hold the washer down, but without going through the hole in the centre of the washer. The advantages are you can press a lot harder, do the job quicker and it does does not wear off the calluses from the end of your finger caused by soldering small components while held between the fingers! (or is that a disadvantage?) You do need to rotate the washer to change the direction of stroke part way through the thinning down process or you can end up with an uneven thickness.

You can now do digit saving, washer thinning, wheel mounting, symmetrically!

MEMBERS MARKET PLACE

For Sale

Rolling Stock (no longer required)
All compensated, painted, weathered, etc., with appropriate buffers and couplings.
Wagons -
all Parkside @ £15.00 ea.
2 x LNER Fish Van Dia 134
2 x LNER Fish Van Dia 134 (Insulated)
1 x LNER 12ton 5 plank Open
1 x LNER Cattle Truck
1 x LNER Fruit Van (Plank Sides)
1 x LMS Motor Car Van Dia 1657
3 x LMS 10ton Fish Vans Dia 2059
1 x LMS CCT Dia 1929
Also:
Half Rake LNER Tourist Stock (Mailcoach) comprising
2 x Twin Open Thirds (Articulated)
1 x Open Third Brake
1 x Open Third Buffet Car
(NB A full rake consisted of these 6 coaches doubled up)
This half-rake of 6 coaches to be sold complete at £125.00
Please contact Peter Tyson (4877) be phone/Fax on 01287-623184
or by e-mail at
<pjt25@tutor.open.ac.uk>

USING CLEAR DECAL FILM FOR LINING

By David Lane 4719

Lining

Hardly a new idea, but probably worth the mention for newer modellers. Boiler band lining is difficult, not to say impossible, to do straight on to the model so my procedure is to obtain a sheet of 'clear decal film', which is widely available in the plastic modelling world*. This is the basis for creating your own waterslide decals (or transfers). Spray or handbrush a coat of the body colour of your locomotive on the film and let dry thoroughly (overnight). Then using a draughtsman's type bow-pen draw a number of lines, of appropriate width, in paint, which may need to be just slightly thinned, of the centre colour of the lining (eg black for SR and LNER lining). Draw several more lines than you actually need, to allow for subsequent error. Again let dry thoroughly (patience is a real virtue in this game!). Still using the SR/LNER white/black/white lining example, next edge your black lines with fine white lines. A further tip here is not to use 'straight' white paint, but to 'let down' the white slightly with a touch of black, so it becomes a sort of off-white, which doesn't stand out so starkly on the model - an example of 'scale colour'. This is when the surplus of black lines proves of value because you'll probably find that some of the white lines don't come out as neatly as you wish. Also, while you are at it, edge one or two of the black lines with a single white line. Again let dry.

Right, when you are in the right frame of mind, and unlikely to be interrupted, take your model, your decal sheet, a sharp scalpel blade, a small paintbrush, and a fine nosed pair of tweezers, and start by arriving at the length of the boiler band you need.

Probably the only bit of geometrical theory I've ever found consistently useful in modelling is *Pi.* So measure the diameter of your boiler somehow to within a millimetre or so, multiply that figure by *Pi* (3.142 is near enough) to give the circumference, and carefully cut a strip of your decal band to a little over the length arrived at - you don't need to cut tight up against the white lines unless the band has to butt up against the smokebox or cab, in which case cut as near as you can to one of them. Having painted the base colour of the decal sheet the same as your loco body colour any excess of decal film won't be noticeable. Use tepid water with just a minute touch of wetting-agent - household detergent - to soak the decal and also to 'lubricate' the surface of the model and use the fine pointed tweezers to lift the decal off the backing sheet and onto the model, keeping it fairly wet. You should be able to tuck the ends of the decal strip under any handrails, etc and tease them into place. Still keep it quite damp using the paintbrush and make sure that it is aligned correctly, both vertically, from each side, and transversely, from the top. I find that such bands can be manoeuvered into position, while wet, just using the point of the paintbrush. A crooked boiler band does rather spoil the finish!

Another possibly tricky place to line can be the bottom of the rear of the tender body - especially when you have fitted lamp irons and vac pipes (you are a fine-scale modeller, surely?) to the tender. This is a case where you use the single edged lining - just cut a strip of adequate length, and tease it along that bottom edge behind all those protrusions. The side and top lining of that tender rear can be lined in more orthodox manner - or you can use the same decal strip to do all four edges. On a model such as a SR 'King Arthur' (the subject that prompted writing this) which has long straight splashers, the same single edged strip can be used for the splasher lining leaving just a little careful hand work for the small curves at the front of the splashers.

However, whenever possible, long lengths of lining, such as on the 'Arthur's' double bogie tender, are best done with bow-pen and straight edge straight onto the model - it can be very difficult to keep a long length of decal strip exactly straight.

Insignia

I always dislike placing pressure-sensitive (or similar) transfers directly onto the model - invariably getting something out of line and risking resultant damage in correcting it. Also, in some cases, the location on the model is one that make such application very difficult. So, again I use techniques common in the plastic aircraft modelling discipline. I tend to make such insignia into waterslide decals, using the same clear decal sheet as referred to above. An essential preliminary is to make sure that your model's paint surface is as smooth and glossy as possible - here again the domestic cupboard comes to our aid - a floor polish by name of Johnson's Klear brushed (not sprayed) over the surface of the panel of the model involved provides a hard smooth gloss (it is, incidentally, also valuable simply as a sealing agent over painted surfaces subject to much handling). No need to coat the whole model, just the panels, such as tender or cab sides, where the insignia is to be placed. We get rid of the high gloss later on.

This procedure has proved successful, again on the 'Arthur', with Pressfix™ decals which are very well past, by years, their best-before date. The great advantage is that you are working on a flat surface, and not on a model propped precariously into position. The process is simply to transfer the relevant insignia or number onto the decal sheet just as you would onto the model, but, if using Pressfix™ or Methfix™ transfers, keeping the amount of liquid used to a bare minimum - if you do this there will be insufficient liquid to harm the underlying decal sheet. Where the insignia is going onto the locomotive's 'body colour', such as the Dark Olive on the 'Arthur', again use decal sheet prepainted with that colour. When done and set cut out the piece of decal sheet used, trimming as close to the edge of the insignia as possible (again a sharp blade is recommended), and apply, as described above with the boiler banding, to the required position on the model, and allow to dry. Any water stain residue can be wiped away subsequently with a wet cotton bud. The same process is followed for such things as front buffer beam numbers, but prepainted decal sheet isn't really necessary for such. If you're really artistic you could even make your own 'coats of arms', and other fancy things not commercially available, in this way - but if you are that competent none of this will be new to you anyway! Anyway, back to the model. When the decals are firmly dried and set, give the whole panel concerned another coat of Johnson's Klear as a protective seal. Then, with that dry, spray (preferably) with a satin, or semi-matt, varnish. This will tend to minimise the presence of the underlying decal surface, quite apart from making the model look more realistic anyway. Indeed, if you can, use a matt varnish on the smokebox and footplate. There weren't too many high-gloss 'real' engines anyway, and highly glossy models always look wrong. Some issues back I referred to some Protec varnishes, and used their Satin one on my 'Arthur' project quite satisfactorarily. Again Xtracolor/ Microscale/Superscale varnishes work well.

Support

Mention of my support device (No, not my walking stick!) may be of help. It is a base of hardboard some 14" x 6", with another piece of hardboard of the same size but with a piece 3" x 10" cut out to leave a 'L' shape. These are held apart simply by off-cut lengths of 40mm x 20mm prepared timber so that there is a recessed area with the 3" x 10" dimensions. The face of the recessed area is covered with a piece of Fablon 'green baize' material available from DIY shops. This actually provides a depth of 40mm and a length of 10" in which to rest your model. If you also obtain some sheet balsa (or any similar sheet material)and cut one or two pieces to fit in the recess, facing it with the same green baize type Fablon, you can then adjust the depth so that the surface of the model is just below the top hardboard level - which then provides a hand and ruler rest while working reasonably safely on the model.

***Sources** If you are near a decent model shop that specialises in plastic kits, then you will probably find what you want there, if not: Clear Decal - H G Hannant & Sons., Trafalgar House, 29-32 Trafalgar Street, Lowestoft, Suffolk. NR32 2AT, UK. (01502-517444) , and/or Model Art

Decal System, PO Box 64, Bury. Lancs., BL9 0SF, UK (01706-827500) - Sheet GEN-001 is the item number. Xtracolor/Microscale/Superscale Varnishes in Matt, Semi-Matt and Gloss, are available from Hannants, as above. Xtracolor is their own brand. Privileged as I am, editorially, in seeing the Scaleforum Guide in advance, I note that Four Track Models are also marketing these products

Protec Varnishes - Protec Hydrocoatings, PO Box 69, Wallasey, Wirral, L45 9NS, UK.

Perhaps needless to say, my only connection with these concerns is as an occasional customer.

SCALEFOUR DIGESTS

5.5.1(1) & 5.5.1(2)

MRJ INDICES

(Distributed with* Scalefour News *103)

For those of you with access to computers who would like to have a version of these Indices on disk, which would facilitate finding subjects using key word searches, such disk copies are being made available through the kind offices of Allan Sibley. The files are in Excel .XLS format, theoretically importable by other spreadsheet programs (however I find that they do not import cleanly into Lotus 123 v.5). My AmiPro Word Processor will locate a selected word using its ‘Find’ facility. Presumably other Word Processors will also be helpful in this manner.

These disks are available from Allan Sibley, (address on the Trade News page (p.23)), at a price, inclusive of postage, of £2.50. Cheques should be drawn payable to A. Sibley, and not to the Society. If you would like to collect such a disk from Allan at Scaleforum please contact him in advance so he can ensure keeping one available for you - he will additionally have a supply of un-ordered ones available at Scaleforum, but, to be sure, pre-order yours. Those disks collected personally will be priced at £2.00 each, and will be obtainable from the Cambridge Area Groups Pampisford layout.

Please note that these indices are prepared by a Society Member and not by *MRJ*.

If any ‘on-line’ members would like a copy provided ‘attached’ to an e-mail, they should contact David Lane on <s4soc@dial.pipex.com>. DL.

97 THE TWENTY FIRST Scaleforum BRING and BUY

Yet again - that popular attraction, the Scaleforum Bring and Buy Stand.

So, dig out those unbuilt and/or unwanted items you have hoarded away, fill out the accompanying Bring and Buy Form, and bring them along and make your Scaleforum visit profitable as well as entertaining and enjoyable. It is an opportunity not only to dispose of, or obtain, items for yourself, but also helps the funding of the Society. However, be sensible - its not an opportunity for disposing of rubbish.

Bear in mind that Magazines cannot be accepted, nor mains powered electrical items. Also note that items are deposited with the Stand Organisers entirely at Owner's Risk, and that the Society accepts no liability regarding the condition and usability of items sold on behalf of members.

THE MODEL RAILWAY CLUB

Member Rupert D E Brown 2874 has drawn attention to a welcome awaiting any Society members working, living, or passing through London to visit the MRC on Thursday evenings from 7pm at their base at Keen House, 4 Calshot Street, London, N1 9DA (a 5 minute walk up Pentonville Rd from King's Cross/St.Pancras)

The MRC is trying hard to throw off the negative image acquired in recent years, and has layouts and a library of general interest - and, Rupert says, “the beer's not bad either”.

MEMBERS MARKET PLACE

For sale:

Class 47 (Lima original) DynaDrive (Formils own conversion - so perfect!) Just under a year old - For sale £175 (Bodywork is two tone green,with all pipework etc-looks good.)

I also have a complete Formil conversion kit for the Lima Class 33 available at £85

Reason for sale is purely a change of direction and interests.

For further info contact Michael Druiett (4258).

Phone 01243-584822, or e-mail <michaeldruiett@LineOne.net>

SCALEFOUR NORTH

Yes, I know this is the Scaleforum issue, so why mention Scalefour North? Maybe, as a member, you are reading this in anticipation of visiting Scaleforum, or, perhaps, as a visitor at that event, relaxing over a tea or coffee or a beer, and wondering where next to find a similar bonanza of P4 quality railway modelling - wonder no more. It is called Scalefour North, and takes place in the West Riding of Yorkshire, at Wakefield College, on the 28th and 29th of March next year (1998).

This is a new venue for the event, and has enabled the organisers to arrange a yet bigger and better attraction than was previously possible - one that will be well worth the journey even for those of us south of Watford.

There will be at least 8 layouts, possibly more, those confirmed as of writing this being:

Thursford, by Ray Hammond, based upon the old M&GN main line as running between nationalisation and 1959;

Tideswell, by Mr Hudson, being a Midland Railway Branch Terminus;

Lowburn Park, by John Thompson, a pre-Grouping NER urban scene;

Albion Street, by John Shaw, representing the scene in York in BR days (also to be seen at Scaleforum);

Sheffield Bridgehouses, by John Quick, a ‘Period’ layout - dated in 1845;

Hull Town Docks, by Jim Harrison, a hypothetical GN presence in Hull;

Mile End Road, by Don Mensord, no, not London's East End, but Stockport in the '60s; and

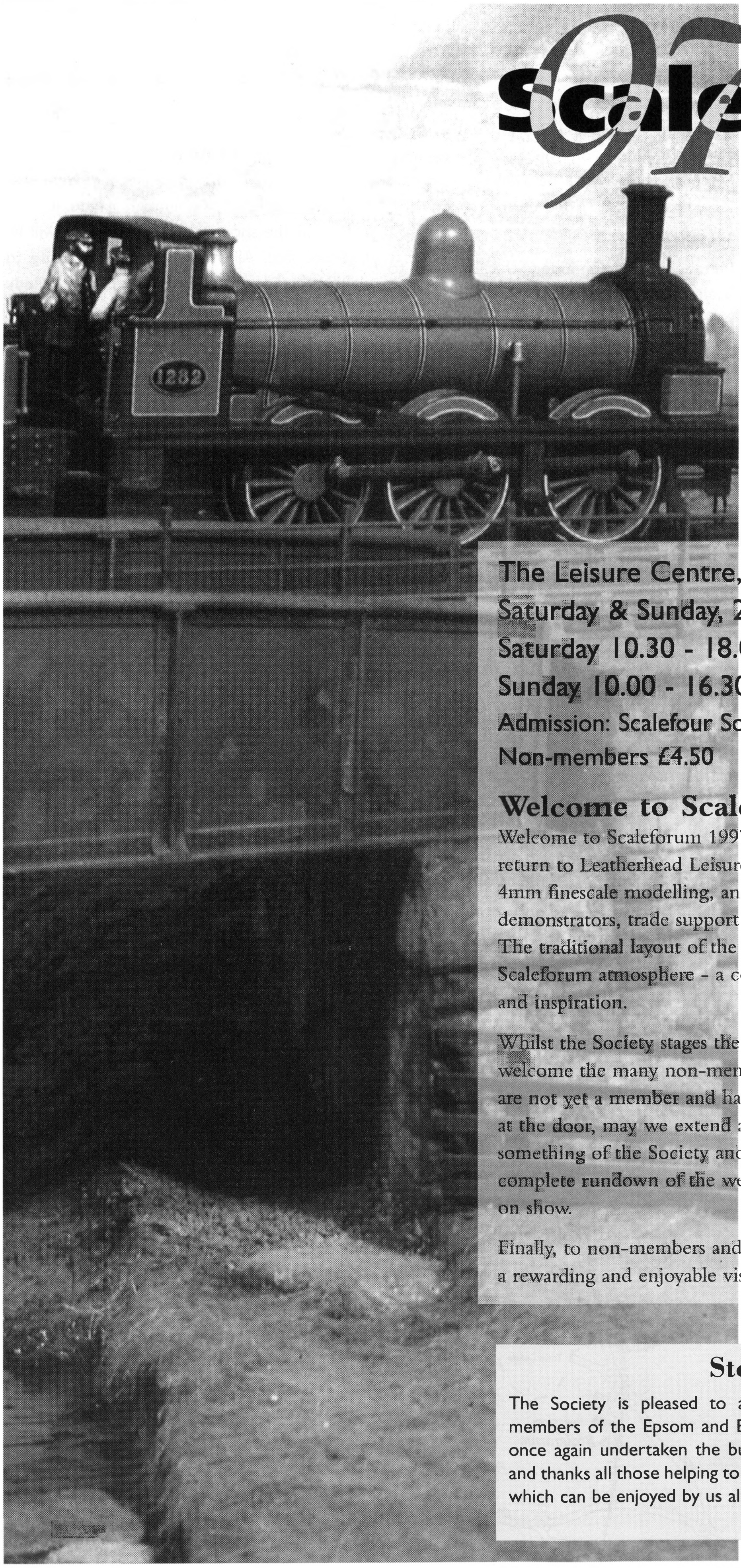
Lower Pandy, by Paul Gittins, a mineral line in North Wales.

The venue, as mentioned above, is Wakefield College, Thornes Park, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, in six months time. Further details will appear in *Scalefour News* 105 due in December, and Issue 106, in February will carry a full programme. Details will also be available to those with access to the Internet on

http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/town/estate/nr49/socshows.htm

- this being updated as further information is made available. DL

THE TWENTY FIRST Scaleforum 97



Bramblewick photo courtesy Tony Wright

The Leisure Centre, Leatherhead, Surrey
Saturday & Sunday, 27th & 28th September
Saturday 10.30 - 18.00hrs
Sunday 10.00 - 16.30hrs
Admission: Scalefour Society members £2.50
Non-members £4.50

Welcome to Scaleforum

Welcome to Scaleforum 1997, our 21st anniversary. Once again we return to Leatherhead Leisure Centre for our annual celebration of 4mm finescale modelling, and hope that our selection of layouts, demonstrators, trade support and other exhibitors meet with approval. The traditional layout of the halls remains unchanged as does the unique Scaleforum atmosphere - a combination of friendliness, enthusiasm and inspiration.

Whilst the Society stages the event primarily for its members, we also welcome the many non-members who visit the show each year. If you are not yet a member and have purchased this copy of *Scalefour News* at the door, may we extend a warm welcome and invite you to learn something of the Society and its work. The following pages give a complete rundown of the weekend's events, and preview what will be on show.

Finally, to non-members and members alike, we sincerely hope you have a rewarding and enjoyable visit to Scaleforum.

Stewards

The Society is pleased to acknowledge the help provided by members of the Epsom and Ewell Model Railway Club, who have once again undertaken the bulk of the stewarding at Scaleforum, and thanks all those helping to achieve a smooth, well-running event which can be enjoyed by us all.

INFORMATION

Security

We must remind all visitors to be alert and vigilant regarding security. Please do NOT leave packets, bags or other items of property unattended and please report any suspicions to a steward or exhibitor immediately. Visitors are also reminded to lock their cars and not to leave valuables in view.

Meeting Point

Visitors may meet in the Reception Area and staff will be able to relay urgent messages via the public address system. Ask the reception staff or any steward.

First Aid

First aid facilities are located in the Reception Area; in case of emergency, advice should be sought from any steward. The Scalefour Society would like to thank St John Ambulance for the provision of First Aid facilities.

Disabled Access

Wheelchair-bound visitors are very welcome at Scaleforum, and the halls have been laid out with wide aisles between exhibits and no barriers to layouts. There is ramp access from street level to the Reception Area and Upper Halls. The Main Halls are at street level, and stewards or reception staff will be pleased to give directions and assistance.

Catering

Catering facilities are located in the Upper Halls, providing tea and coffee, light snacks, meals and full bar facilities. Visitors are requested to refrain from consuming food or drink in the main exhibition areas - adequate seating is available in the Upper Halls and if the weather is fine there is a pleasant patio area overlooking delightful parkland, ideal for escaping the bustle for a half hour or so.

Smoking

Smoking is permitted in the Reception and Refreshment areas, but is prohibited in both of the main Exhibition Halls.

Overnight Accommodation

Members who have booked accommodation through the Society are reminded that their hotel is either the Preston Cross Hotel, Bookham, Sir Douglas Haig, Effingham or The Travel Inn at Chessington Park as previously notified. Extras such as bar bills, phone bills and newspapers are not included in the Society's booked price and must be settled by guests upon departure.

The Society Annual Dinner

Members who have booked a place are reminded that this year it is an informal arrangement at the Leisure Centre, from about 19.00 hrs on the Saturday evening. Spare places may still be available - contact Mike Peascod (0181 868 0851).

Partners

Members are reminded that a visit to Scaleforum need not exclude their nearest and dearest. As is customary, your ticket includes free admission for your partner.

Membership

If you enjoy your visit to Scaleforum and have not yet joined the Scalefour Society, our Membership Secretary, Brian Pearce, can be found next to the Reception desk and will be pleased to give you full details of membership and its benefits. Remember, if you join us here at the show your admission fee will be discounted. Alternatively, you may write to Brian at: 1 Eastcote Road, Pinner, Middx HA5 IDS, enclosing an s.a.e. please.

Travel by Road

Unless travelling locally, use the M25 motorway, leaving at Junction 9. Follow signs for Dorking and use the Leatherhead bypass to avoid the one-way system in the town. The bypass, the A24 in the Dorking direction, becomes the A246 signposted to Guildford. Follow this to the roundabout where the B2122 is signposted, and turn right onto the B2122 heading back towards Leatherhead town centre. (A look at the sketchmap below should clarify the route round the bypass.) The Leisure Centre is well sign-posted from both town centre and bypass, and there is ample free parking within the grounds at either of the two car parks.

Travel by Rail

From Leatherhead station take the footpath indicated on the sketch; less than 10 minutes walk. If the weather is poor you can get a taxi from the station.

Trains From London to Leatherhead

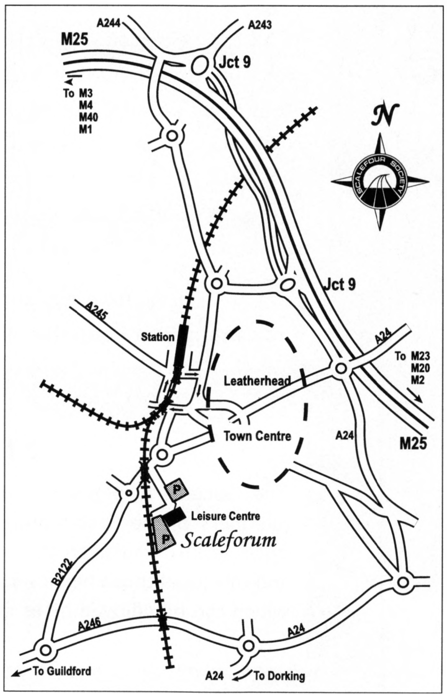
Saturday:

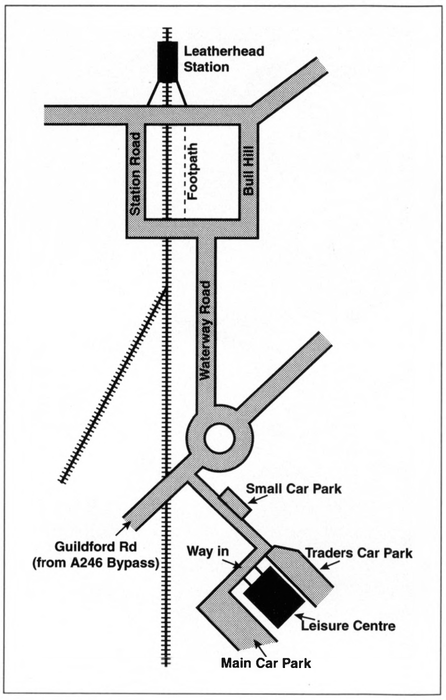
From Waterloo at xx:16 and xx:46.
Journey time 35 minutes
From Victoria at xx:20 and xx:50.
Journey time 45 minutes
And from Victoria at xx:04 and xx:35.
Journey time 40 minutes

Sunday:

Unfortunately the new timetable comes into effect on Sunday 28th September and details are not available at the time of going to press. For information only there was no change last year, the old timetable shows:

From Waterloo at xx:04 and xx:34.
change at Epsom
Journey time 45 minutes
From Victoria at xx:06 and xx:19.
Journey time 1.00 hour





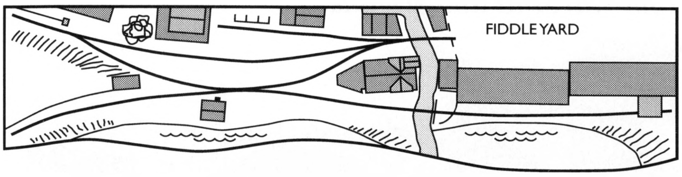
ALBION STREET *John Shaw*

ALBION STREET, my second exhibition layout, came about because my other layout, WETHERBY is too large to run at home. It was inspired by Iain Rice's BUTLEY MILLS. I have given it more of a local flavour, though, by including buildings from the York area.

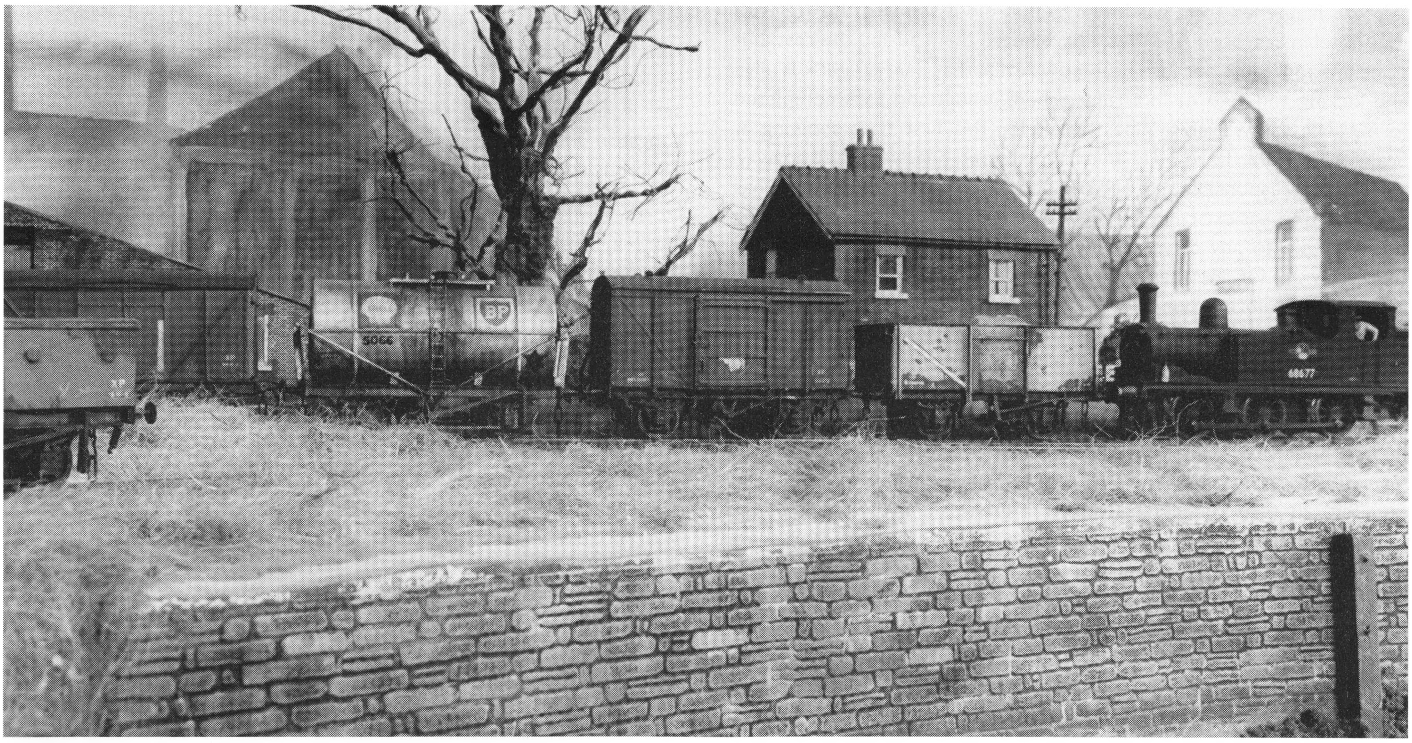
The layout was originally built to 00 standards. However, after joining the Scalefour Society I thought I'd 'take the plunge' and try P4. I therefore had a few practice stabs at ply and rivets and tore up the 00 track.

From the outset, I wanted this layout to be exhibited at eye level, as so many layouts (including mine) are shown at such a low angle that the viewer spends his or her time looking at carriage roofs etc! The higher level also means that the Fiddle yard is hidden behind buildings as opposed to a bridge or tunnel mouth.

The buildings are made of at least three different materials. The white grain warehouse has walls made of 2mm thick HMSO card, coated with ceiling emulsion and scribed to represent large blocks. The large brick warehouse is made of the same card, covered this time in brick plasticard. The goods shed is 1mm ply covered in the same plasticard. Finally, the old pub and shop are the old, well-tried double skinned plasticard type. I wonder which will warp first? As I mentioned before, the track is the Brook Smith type as favoured by the Scalefour Society with C&L chairs. In fact, only one in four sleepers are riveted, the others rely on the plastic chair being glued to the sleeper. The ballast is ... well, I'm not telling, but it isn't laid dry and then glued.



Operation is quite relaxing, it takes about an hour to shunt two short goods trains and with the relative sharpness of curves and points, it makes a good test track.



Shunting on Albion Street. Pic: Steve Flint

CHEADLE *Macclesfield Area Group*

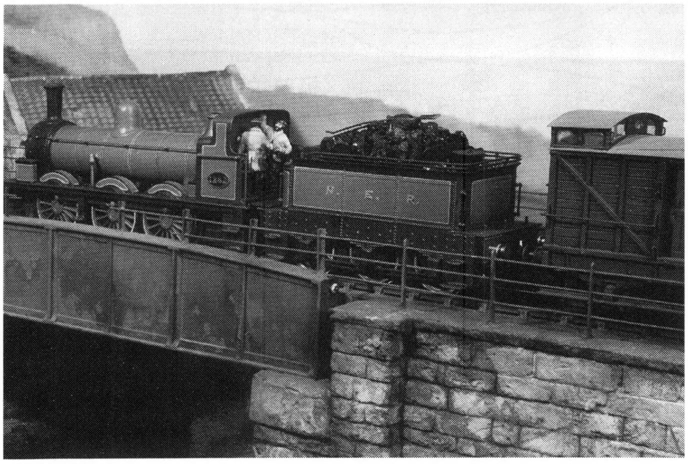
'CHEADLE' is a model of the real North Staffordshire Railway terminus station of the same name, and is the second P4 18.83mm gauge 4mm scale layout produced by the Macclesfield Area Group of the Scalefour Society, and the first model of an actual prototype we have attempted. The model is very nearly to scale size, but has been slightly reduced to fit in the space allocated in the clubrooms of the Macclesfieid Model Railway Group. Track is hand built, using the traditional technique of nickel silver bullhead rail soldered to brass rivets in ply sleepers.

Cheadle is a small market town to the South East of the Potteries. Although in a rural area, the town was also the centre of the Cheadle coalfield, and this mining activity was the main reason for the construction of this four-mile branch railway opened in 1904, which connected with the main line from Stake to Derby at Cresswell. The construction of the line included a tunnel that was a constant source of trouble, and was eventually abandoned by the LMS when they opened a long diversion around it in 1934. The most important colliery was New Haden pit, which on the real thing and the model is situated just 'off stage' from the station. Full coal trains from this colliery and empties working back to it had to proceed into the station to allow the engine to run round the train before continuing with the journey, hence the long run round loop at the station. Some smaller pits in the area carted coal to the station for loading and onward despatch. Passenger services to the station were usually an extension of the famous 'loop line service, working to and from Stoke, Hanley, Tunstall and Kidsgrove'.

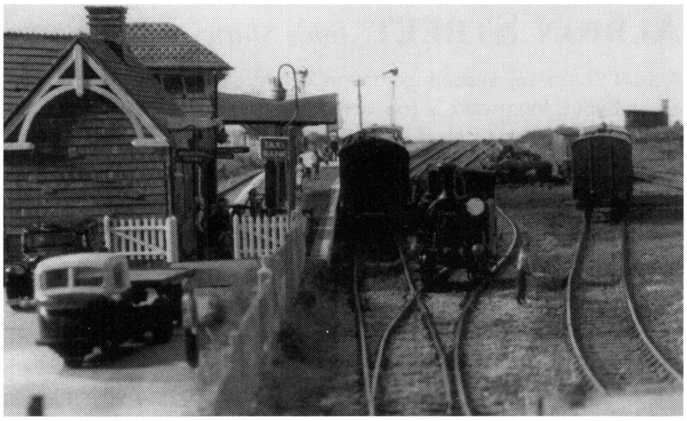
We aim to run a representative selection of trains that might have bean seen on the branch and on the nearby main line during the period circa 1900 to 1928. The stock on the layout is partly kit-built (there is not much trade support for the NSR) with the remainder scratch built. Most of the operators are also members of the North Staffordshire Railway Study Group, so if you have an interest in the NSR please feel free to ask for details of this fine society.

BRAMBLEWICK N.E.R.

Tom Harland and friends.



Those of you familiar with BRAMBLEWICK will by now have noted its absence on the exhibition circuit–in particular last year's Scaleforum! "What's happened to it, has he nogged it, did it slip into the sea with that hotel in Scarborough?" Yes, I have heard them all and the rest, but none are applicable because I can now reveal that BRAMBLEWICK is alive and kicking and returns in a refurbished, rebuilt and 99% completed form, (The 1% will always be there!) for this first time showing at Scaleforum 1997. To re-build an existing layout, nearly finished anyway, smacks of irresponsible masochistic behaviour–to say the least! It has not been the easiest of tasks and I would not recommend following this example to any of you reading these notes–start from scratch! BRAMBLEWICK, for me, has always been an exercise in the aesthetic aspects that embrace our hobby (is that the right word; passion I think is nearer the mark!) I am not an engineer, electrician, carpenter etc., but have learnt some of these skills over the last fourteen years–since the layout's conception. As an artist (my profession) I am concerned with the perceived image. I have tried with BRAMBLEWICK to represent in two and three dimensions the feeling that one has regarding a historical location and period in a time not experienced personally but 'felt', in turn reflecting inwardly a great affinity with all things railway and a never ending passion for a corner of North Yorkshire where distant relations once lived and worked. BRAMBLEWICK still nestles on the edge of a large Bay, and is the largest station on the North Eastern Railway's Scarborough-Whitby line. In reality Robin Hood's Bay provides the setting in the period 1895-1905. This decade permits the running of stock where livery changes have taken place: the earlier period of this decade reflecting the livery of T.W. Worsdell and the later that of his brother Wilson. Both are represented in the operating timetable. The track diagram has been heavily modified, albeit within N.E.R. practice, from the original and provides for a more interesting and entertaining operating sequence, featuring in particular, lengthy mineral trains. I hope BRAMBLEWICK transmits some of the feelings I have tried to build into it and that these may provoke similar thoughts and encouragement in you, the spectator and modeller. The 'B' team will be on hand all weekend, please feel free to ask questions... we will do our best!

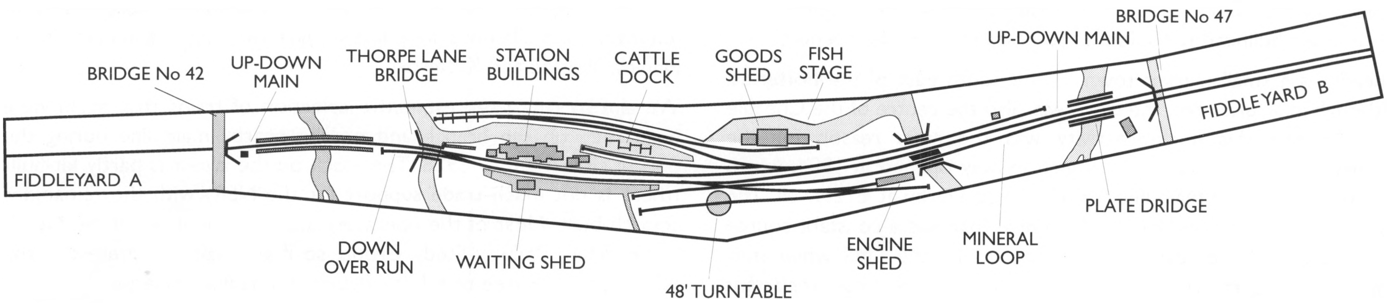


HAYLING ISLAND *Angela Halliday*

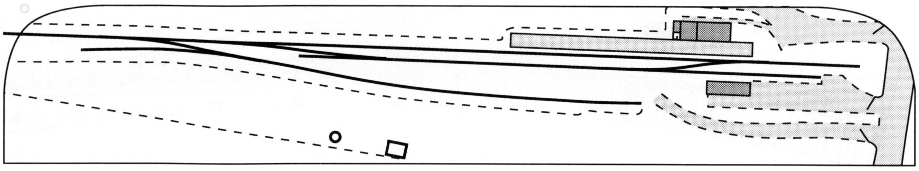
It's August Bank Holiday in the mid-fifties. Holiday makers are arriving, children clasp bucket and spades while mums and dads organise the luggage as Ray Woolgar collects tickets. A taxi waits, a farmer reaps his harvest. Women chat on the station forecourt as a dog runs loose and a man checks a timetable. Further down the track a porter struggles with a grass fire caused by sparks. The engine whistles and runs round its train. The island is mainly flat and comprises a plain between Selsey Peninsula and Portsea Island. The shoreline facing the sea is of sand whilst the remainder is mostly of mud especially Langston and Chichester harbours. The line first opened in January 1865 but soon closed due to mud erosion nearby.

Finally, trains ran on a new route in time for the second day of the Hayling Races, 17 July 1867. Because of the weakness of the bridge the only locomotive allowed to cross was the Stroudley Terrier, although a 'P' class was tested but never used. Unlike most lines, the Hayling Branch actually showed a running profit, but this was insufficient to meet the £400,000 needed to replace the ageing crumbling bridge. The last public trains ran on 2 November 1963. Little evidence now remains and the track bed has been converted into a pleasant walk along the edge of Langston harbour, but the bark of the Terriers can no longer be heard unless you take your dog!

Hayling Island photos: Barry Norman courtesy Model Railway Journal



LEYSDOWN *Wealdon Area Group*



Of the standard-gauge light railways of Kent, one of the most successful was the Sheppey Light Railway, conceived by the islanders in the 1890s and engineered by the well-known Holman F. Stephens. After being absorbed into the S.E. & C.R. the line was improved, enlarged and partly standardised.

Our layout represents the terminus at LEYSDOWN in the early 1930s. The station was the largest on the line serving the embryonic seaside resort, and offered limited facilities including cattle pens along with a horse and carriage dock.

As this is the group's first project, we required a station to model which had a fairly simple track plan with only a few structures to get us started. A further consideration was space in the Uckfield M.R.C.'s clubrooms where the layout was to be accommodated.

Having looked at Brian Hart's book of the line, Leysdown was an ideal choice enabling us to build a full scale model in only 16ft, including the fiddle yard. Also, apart from the station building, a typical Colonel Stephens item, there was only one other structure, namely the S.E. & C.R. water tower of which plans were available.

The layout comprises four 4ft x 2ft plywood baseboards with integral legs. Trackwork has been built using ply and rivet construction to P4 standards laid on foam underlay. Turnouts are operated by slow action Tortoise motors. Simple cassettes are used in the fiddle yard.

The buildings are scratchbuilt using a variety of materials, principally card & plasticard. Use has been made of lint for the undergrowth with additional products from the Woodland Scenics range much to the fore. Rolling stock is varied at the present time and may not be truly typical of that which ran on the line. However, thoughts have turned to the provision of one of the two ex. S.E. & C.R. articulated coach sets which were the main passenger stock for many years.

Much thought has been put into the presentation of the layout with lighting pelmet, and the continuous backscene, both ideas taken from the Uckfield M.R.C.'s 7mm layout. The complete layout, lighting, stock & two operators fits into a family estate car for easy transportation.

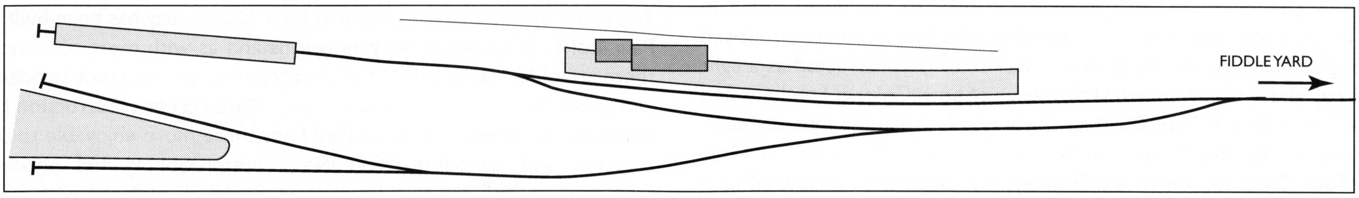
We hope that you will enjoy the layout and we will be happy to answer any questions, you never know you might be offered some Leysdown seaside rock!

BROCKLEY HILL *Tony Osmond*

BROCKLEY HILL is a purely fictitious name, for a purely fictitious layout. The layout was built by Ian Futers years ago as a North British Railway through station. I purchased the layout (I believe, third hand) in a state much modified from the original, and I am uncertain about who originally built what part of the layout., but since owning it I have added the goods yard at the left end, and converted the track layout to that of a branch terminus.

The track is a mixture of C&L, SMP and Brook Smith ply and rivet. The original baseboards are very sturdily constructed in plywood and two-by-one softwood, I have added medium density fibreboard tops on the original frames. The scenery is the work of Ray Earl (of Penny Hasset and Lower Loxley fame), who has just about repainted every inch of the layout.

The rolling stock is a mixture of kits built over the last ten years, but it is intended that a set of much earlier stock will work the layout one day. All the stock is fitted with Alex Jackson couplings, which are operated by uncoupling electromagnets. The controllers are all plug-in so that the operator can use the type they prefer.



FLINTCOMBE *The East Dorset Gang of Four*

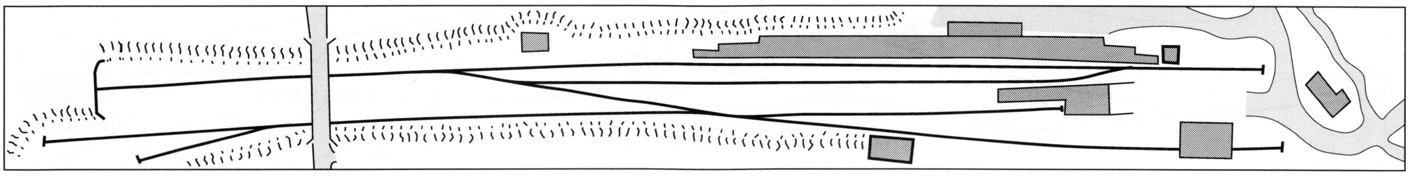
The layout represents the end of a fictional spur running south west from the S&DJR line at Sturminster Newton. The name and location are derived from one of Thomas Hardy's novels about life in 19th Century Dorset, but the layout portrays the picture as it might have been in the late 1930's.

The scenic aspects attempt to represent the chalk terrain typical of the supposed Dorset location, while the main railway buildings have been based on S&DJR examples from different parts of the S&D system.

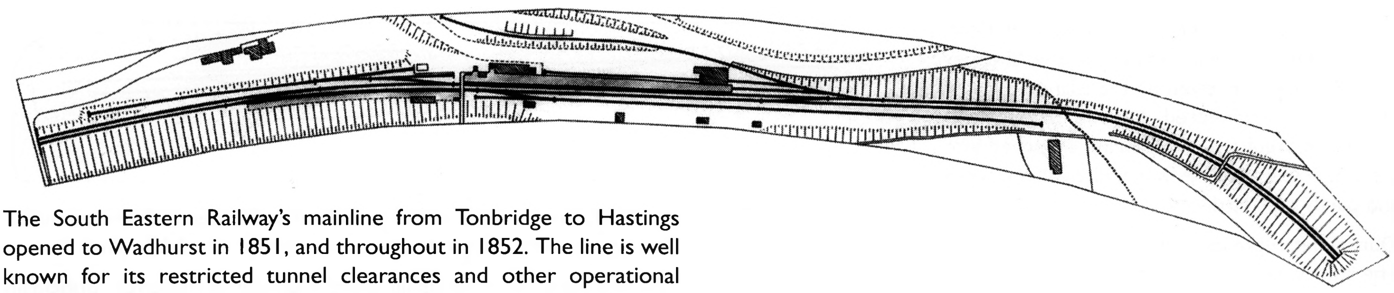
On the technical side, trackwork is a mixture of scratch-built (ply sleepers and rivets with C&L cosmetic chairs) and C&L flexible. Layout signals are constructed largely from MSE components, with autocoupling coming from the same stable, using the 3mm scale version of the 'Sprat & Winkle' modified in the way described by Philip Hall in *Model Railway Journal* Issue No.0.

The control system provides a signalling/switching facility between operators, with all the trains leaving the fiddleyard under the control of the main layout operators, while all trains moving to the fiddleyard are controlled by the fiddleyard operator.

The concealed fiddleyard has a sector plate which incorporates a locomotive traverser at the pivoted end. The sector plate provides access not only to the main line of the layout, but also to the storage sidings concealed beneath the adjacent hillside.



WADHURST *Peter Swift*



The South Eastern Railway's mainline from Tonbridge to Hastings opened to Wadhurst in 1851, and throughout in 1852. The line is well known for its restricted tunnel clearances and other operational difficulties, the result the line on the cheap across and through the difficult hilly terrain of the High Weald which lies between the Medway and Rother river valleys.

Situated at the summit of the line, some 400 feet above sea level, with arduous gradients on either side lies Wadhurst station, like many a good rural station it is a good two miles from the village it purports to serve. The station is characteristic of SER design of the period with its staggered platforms and plain but functional buildings, the exception being the fine Italian style station building designed by Willliam Tress.

The model being built by members of the Epsom & Ewell MRC is the clubs first venture into P4 modelling. It is no gentle initiation with constructing a small branch line layout, we have jumped in feet first and chosen a prototype station on a double track main line! Even though the scenic portion of the layout is 31 feet in length we have had to compress the prototype configuration to fit the available space, whilst managing to model the central station area reasonably accurately to scale. Originally intended to be an end-to-end layout, the decision was made to extend the layout into a full circuit which approximates to a scale mile, and to incorporate the rising gradients - a potentially difficult proposition for 4-4-0's on 10 coach trains.

The layout is presented at Scaleforum as a 'layout under construction', despite an already lengthy gestation period we still have a great deal more to do before the model can even be considered as nearing completion, especially so with rolling stock. The intended period being modelled represents Southern Railway practice of the 1930s, at which date the primary motive power on the line was Maunsell's fine 'Schools' class locomotives, supported by other ex-SECR 4-4-0s, hauling up to 11 coach rakes. These coaches and the Pullman Cars which were included in many of the principal trains were specially built to a reduced width (Restriction 0) for use on the line. To date little appropriate stock has been completed so please bear with us this weekend as we entertain you and educate ourselves (or is that the other way round) by extending guest running rights to all manner of available stock.

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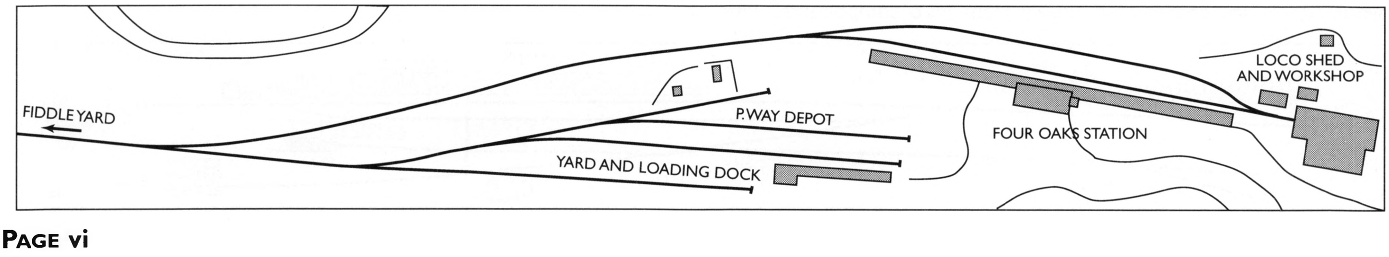
THE BECKLEYTRAMWAY *Dave Medhurst*

The tramway once ran from Rye to Northiam, or would have done so had it ever existed in reality. From Rovindene Road station, located $^1/_2$ mile north of Rye station, the line followed an 8 mile route alongside the River Rother to Four Oaks station near Beckley village before continuing on for a further $2^1/_2$ miles to Northiam. Built in 1902, one year after the East Sussex Light Railway had been proposed along a similar route, the tramway was actually constructed as a light railway and was influenced by the styles of both Colonel Stephens and the South Eastern and Chatham Railway. The line fell into disrepair during the Second World War and was subsequently closed. The Rye to Four Oaks section of the Tramway has since been reopened by a preservation group and the layout depicts a current day Four Oaks station having been reopened, with an engine shed now standing at the end of the line that would have once continued on to Northiam.

Meandering through the vivid greens of the Sussex countryside trains pass a River Rother tributary, where herons can often be observed eyeing up passing trout, before making their way up a 1 in 83 gradient to Four Oaks station. Here the locos, their crews and maybe even the operator are given the opportunity to take on essential supplies. The movement of stock is handled by Digitol or Gaugemaster controllers in conjunction with playing cards and a pair of electronic dice. The latter are intended to spice up life for the chap in the fiddle yard! Track construction is steel rail soldered to rivets set into stained plywood sleepers. The landscape foundations are plywood and card formers with net curtain material, in abundance following a house move, stretched over the top and then plastered. Inspiration for much of the scenery especially the buildings has come from the Rye and Camber Tramway. A 14ft single span pelmet provides cover for directable tungsten-halogen low voltage lighting.

The majority of stock to be seen at Four Oaks today has been built by Paul Tasker from kits of varying origins and as with most collections there are older items which don't really come up to current standards and these are slowly being phased out. More recent construction has tended towards etched kits as Paul finds these more enjoyable to put together and considers they give a better-looking end product. Components included in a kit may be modified, replaced with parts cannibalised from other kits, or scratchbuilt if this will obtain a superior result. The power source for locos seems to have been standardised as Mashima can motors on Branchlines, Ultrascale based, 2-stage 60:1 or 80:1 gearboxes where this combination will fit, but often with the driving axle repositioned. Compensation by one means or another and Smiths' couplings are almost universally used as is a top coat of Ronseal varnish applied with a 20 year old, bottom-of-the-range Humbrol airbrush. A generous proportion of the SECR and LBSCR locos and coaches have however been painted by Bob Fridd of Canterbury.

A handout has been prepared for anyone who fancies further details on layout and stock, so if you are genuinely interested please ask for a copy.



Pampisford *Cambridge Area Group*

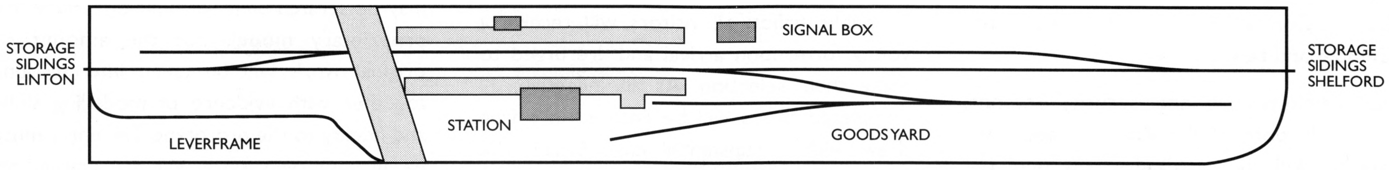
Pampisford is an exact scale model of the station of that name, located on the former Great Eastern Railway route from Cambridge to Colchester - known as the Stour Valley Line. Pampisford was the first station on the line after its divergence from the Cambridge - London main line at Shelford Junction.

The line opened in 1865 and closed (between Shelford Junction and Sudbury) in 1967. Pampisford station building and yard is now the premises of a building materials supply company.

The layout portrays Pampisford station in the British Railways period circa 1958: the time of transition between steam and diesel power.

Work on the layout began in May 1982, shortly after the formation of the Cambridge Area Group of the Scalefour Society, and was completed in 1987.

The Cambridge Area Group is based at Fulbourn, about four miles east of Cambridge, with storage and working facilities in premises kindly provided by the United Reform Church. New members are welcome.



VISITING SOCIETIES

The World War 2 Railway Study Group

The group brings together modellers and historians who have an interest in railways in any country during the Second World War. A Bulletin is published six times a year.

The Second World War offers huge possibilities to modellers, such as locos working well off their parent systems, locos being used as target practice and large amount of traffic due to new factories, new depots, new ports and the build up to D-day. New connections were laid between existing railways and there were a variety of incidents such as bombings, plane crashes on railways and explosions.

Ambulance trains were put together from existing railway company stock and were used in various countries. British freight vehicles were built for transporting tanks and for supplying the Eastern Front via the land route through Iran to Russia (and the Germans used railway equipment to supply their forces in the same zone).

The build up to D-day saw large numbers of American 2-8-0 freight locos, O-6-OT shunters and bogie Whitcomb diesel locos appear in the UK. US Army freight cars were assembled at various places, including the tube train depot at Hainault

Disposal of war material after hostilities ceased resulted in some countries operating very mixed fleets of British 2-8-0, American 2-8-0 and German 2-10-0 locos. Some of the German 2-10-0s even found their way to Vietnam via the USSR.

Membership is £12.50 a year (£9.00 a year pensioner rate).

The Membership Secretary is Mike Christensen, 25 Woodcote Road, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 7LF.

Tel: 01926 429378

The Industrial Railway Society,

The Industrial Railway Society, which was formed in 1949 as the Industrial Locomotive section of the Birmingham Locomotive Club, caters for those interested in privately owned locomotives and railways. Members receive the *Industrial Railway Record* in addition to a bi-monthly bulletin containing topical news and amendments to the Society's Handbook series, access to a well stocked library, visits to and rail tours of industrial railway systems and certain Society publications at discounted prices. A recent innovation has been the provision of specific support to industrial modellers. A range of Society publications will be on display at Scaleforum 1997.

Further details of the IRS are available by sending two first class stamps to Bernard Mettam, 27 Glenfield Crescent, Newbold, Chesterfield. S41 8SF

The Historical Model Railway Society,

The H.M.R.S. is an educational charity founded in 1950 for the encouragement of research and recording of information on the railways of the British Isles. There about 2000 members worldwide, comprising active researchers, modellers, and people with a broad affection for Britain's railways. Members receive a quarterly journal and a regular newsletter together with a substantial discount on H.M.R.S. publications and on the well-known 'P.C.' range of transfers which are now marketed by the Society.

The Society owns large collections of drawings and photographs, all of which are available to members at advantageous prices. A member with a query on a specific railway can contact one of a panel of specialist stewards who collate and exchange information. Area groups in many parts of the country hold meetings, lectures and demonstrations.

The Annual subscription is £19.50. Further details for the Membership Secretary: Mr A. Straw, 11, Gorse Avenue, Mansfield, Notts. NG18 3NS.

The 2mm Association

Once again we welcome the 2mm association to Scaleforum. They will be demonstrating a wide range of techniques, many of which are suitable for use in 4mm scale. They will also have on sale their range of excellent modelling books.

For further details of joining the 2mm Association, please contact the Publicity Officer, Steve Dunkeyson, 10 Ainley Place, Slaithwaite, W. Yorks. HD7 5UY

Test Tracks

This year we welcome back the West Midlands Area Group with their Test Track, who will be offering you a chance to run your favourite locomotive which is normally confined to an end-to-end layout or even a box. They will have a small collection of rolling stock to hang on the drawbeam, 3 link/screw or Alex Jackson fitted. Power supply is 12v DC delivered via a choice of feedback and non-feedback controllers.

A word of warning from the WMAG and the Scalefour Society is that, for insurance reasons, if you bring a loco along its fate is entirely your responsibility, They will provide sensible safety in terms of side rails to try and prevent anything landing on the floor but we all have to leave it to you to ensure that you select the appropriate controller and drive carefully.

COMPETITIONS

The Chairman's Cup

The Classes remain unchanged once again this year, and appointed judges will determine Class winners and the overall winner of the Cup. In addition to the Chairman's Cup, there is the award of the Cumberland Bowl - for the best 4mm: lft scale model of a locomotive or item of rolling stock built to standards other than P4. Generally the Rules of the Chairman's Cup Competition apply to the Cumberland Bowl.

For administrative and security reasons, entries in both of the above competitions will normally be on display only until the close of the show on the Saturday evening. Entries should be submitted no later than 13.30hrs on Saturday; entry forms will be available from the Competitions Stand on the day.

The Deputy Chairman's Cup Competition

The Deputy Chairman's Cup Competition is once again being administered, stewarded and judged by members of the North West Essex Area Group. There are no changes to either the *modus operandi* or the rules for 1997. The competition is for locomotives built to 4mm scale 18.83mm gauge and is divided into two classes - for locos with:

(a) scratch-and kit-built chassis.

(b) re-wheeled proprietary chassis.

Performance is assessed in terms of tractive effort, steady running and track-holding ability, and points are awarded accordingly. The builder of the locomotive achieving the highest points total in each class is the winner. The class A winner receives the Deputy Chairman's Cup and the Class B winner a Certificate of Commendation.

The York Trophy

Ken York, in his role as General Secretary, was a guiding light from the inception of the Society until his death in 1987. For many years he was the driving force behind Scaleforum and his enthusiastic appreciation of good P4 layouts was legendary. So it is most apposite that the York Trophy should be awarded to the most popular layout at Scaleforum each year. The winner is decided by public ballot; all visitors will receive a voting form upon arrival and are urged to make their selection. As an incentive, all completed forms will be entered in a free draw with a substantial cash prize! The count and presentation take place on Sunday afternoon.

The York Trophy

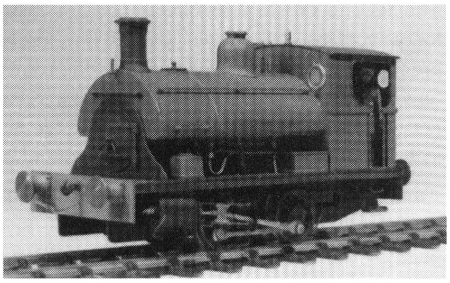
Don't forget to complete your voting form for the York Trophy. Please select the layout that appeals to you most and mark your choice on the form given to you when you arrived. Completed forms should be put into the voting box as you leave the halls.

The MRJ Chalice

The *MRJ* Chalice was established in 1986 to mark the Scalefour Society's tenth anniversary. No formal 'entry' is needed as the judges (appointed by *Model Railway Journal*) will select the winner from anywhere in the show. Entrants must be members of the Society and the judges will be seeking models which exemplify excellence in 4mm scale modelling.

The Irwell Novice Shield

It is sometimes felt that the high standard demanded for one of the Society's major awards can act as a deterrent to inexperienced modellers. Therefore the East Hampshire Area Group manage a competition, aimed specifically at the less experienced modeller. Entry is restricted to members who have never previously won a Scalefour Society competition. or been placed, or received a commendation. The rules are similar to those for the Chairman's Cup, but there is only one category, i e. locomotives or rolling stock, built to conform to Protofour standards. The entry may be scratch-built, kit-built or a modified proprietary model, but the amount of original work will be taken into account together with evidence of modelling skills and fidelity to the prototype The entry must be all your own work. We are grateful to Irwell Press who have once again sponsored this award by means of The Irwell Novice Shield (which the winner will be able to keep, together with the choice of a book from Irwell's current list). The competition will be judged by a representative from Irwell Press and a member of the East Hampshire Area Group.



From last year's Chairmans Cup Competion, The Class I winners. Steve Lee's scratch-built Peckett Class R2, the Class award winner. Pic Tony Wright

SPECIALIST SERVICES

A number of people in the hobby provide an admirable service to the modeller, though not reaching the stage of being 'Traders' they have a fine product to market and we feel that it is essential to make available such services to our members.

Mike King, *Drawings*

Mike produces a range of over 150 drawings of rolling stock for the Southern (and pre-grouping constituents) enthusiast, covering the period from the 1870s to the 1970s. He began the drawings for his own use some 25 years ago, using official information, measurements from surviving vehicles and other published drawings. The range now covers over 500 coaches and wagons, so most Southern enthusiasts (and those just wanting one or two Southern vehicles) will find something of interest.

Mike Thorp, *Railway photographs*

Mike will be offering for sale a range of several thousand second-hand railway photographs covering rolling stock, stations and railway scenes as well as locomotives. Allow some time to have a good browse.

AREA GROUPS

Area Group Meeting

Each day there will be a chance for representatives of the Area Groups to get together and discuss things of mutual interest. The meetings will commence at 14.00 hours and will be chaired by Russell McCoy, the Area Group Co-ordinator. Each meeting usually results in something of interest, so please ensure that as many groups as possible are represented.

Look out for the signs or ask a steward for directions.

Area Group Stand

If you are a member of an Area Group you can talk to Russell McCoy, the Society's Area Group Co-ordinator about how you can best promote your activities. If you would like to set up your own area group, Russell will be able to help with its formation, or if you are thinking of joining an area group, he will be able to put you in touch with the most suitable one.

DEMONSTRATORS

Tony Wilkins, Track

Tony has been a successful track builder for many years now, first starting in EM and now in P4 for a layout currently under construction. His method of track and turnout construction is a mixture of the traditional rivet and ply-sleeper, coupled with some C&L parts to give to give a strong, reliable and long lasting track base.

Barry Norman, Scenics

Twisting wire to make trees, teasing carpet felt to texture grass and cutting hemp to copy a field of standing corn are now familiar techniques. These simple and cheap materials can easily be crafted into a likeness of our real world. Since Barry's book *Landscape Modelling,* written 10 years ago, the art of scenic modelling is taken as seriously as that of locomotive building and so it should be. Come and talk with Barry about what you have discovered in your landscape modelling – that is why he wrote the book.

Tony Williams, Alex Jackson Couplings

With the growing popularity of the Alex Jackson coupling, we have this year a dedicated demonstration by Tony Williams of how they operate, and Tony will be explaining how to make and fit a reliable coupling system.

Tim Rogers, Diesel and Electric Era Modelling

Modern image modelling is not really a correct term when one considers that some diesels have been around for 40 years or more, but I cannot come up with a better alternative. I have been modelling seriously in Scalefour for about 10 years and have produced some finished products from R-T-R with proprietary items, and I am willing to share my knowledge gained with you. So come along and have a chat and I will attempt to convince you that the tasks undertaken are not too onerous and can be acheived with a modicum of skill.

Jonathan Miller, Workshop Practices

Working with sheet metal becomes much easier when the correct tools and techniques are employed. Methods of cutting, filing. shaping and joining will be shown, by means of basic hand tools that should not break the bank.

Peter Squibb, Signalling

By the grouping signalling had developed into a precise science. Strangely, it is not generally modelled in the same way. Beside construction techniques, Peter will be advising on positioning the things.

Charlie Trace, Coach Building

Charlie will be showing how to get the most out of building coach kits kits, The emphasis is on basic techniques, and how cross-kitting and scratch-building can take a model to a higher level.

Mike Grey, Resistance & Low Melt Solder

Resistance soldering has now become established as a useful technique for modellers. Its main application seems to be for detailing models in brass and nickel silver and, to a lesser extent, white metal. This year, Mike will be demonstrating basic principles for those still new to the technique and then go on to extend the frontiers and show examples of some of the latest tricks! Such advances have often come from mutual exchange of ideas and in this respect Mike hopes Scaleforum will be no exception.

Geoff Kent, Wagons

Geoff is well known for his expertise in plastic card for scratchbuilding and will be showing us his techniques using this medium to produce wagons principally in Plastikard. Geoff is well known to us through his books, *'The 4mm Wagon'* parts one & two, published by Wild Swan.

John Dopson, Paint & Line

John has been painting and lining his own locos and commissions for some years. He will have the tools of the trade and his own thoughts on the subject. So questions please and problems hopefully dealt with.

Dave Carter, Locos and Chassis

Dave will be offering advice on the many areas of locomotive chassis, including; types of frame, methods of suspension and pick-up, split axles, insulated frames, quartering wheels, valve gear, types of motor and gears, tender mounted drives and commercial hornblocks and bearings.

Ted Coughlan, Buildings in Plasticard

Working mainly in Plastikard, Ted will be displaying and discussing various methods of using plasticard for the creation of architectural models for model railways.

Tony Wright, Photography

A major photographer of models seen in the hobby press, Tony will be on hand to give advice and tips on model photography. As with last year, he will be able to take photographs of customers models at a cost of £10.00 for a 10" x 8" black and white print or £12.00 for a 6" x 7" transparency.

SIMPLIFOUR

Mike Sharman and Paul Gittins

The aim of our demonstration is to 'demystify' many of the techniques employed in modelling to P4 standards and reveal how even beginners can readily attain acceptable standards of running, so overcoming the possibility of disillusionment and the opinion that 'P4 doesn't work'.

P4 does work, thousands of modellers have proved it over the last 30 years. By using simple methods, a 'hands - on' approach and readily available commercial products, we show you how. If you are an out-and-out newcomer please talk freely to us, we will answer in very simple terms about our methods of achieving success and how you can emulate them. Alternatively, if you are on the first rungs of the P4 ladder and are experiencing problems, don't just come and talk about them, bring them along for us to look at. We will not consider them as 'failures' (we've had plenty of our own in the past - and present) but rather as 'unfinished' projects which will, with some advice, attention and fine tuning, become reliable runners. This is particularly relevant where 'Doctor' Mike will put to good use his many years' experience of persuading all manner of of esoteric prime movers to perform well. We will have a 'rolling road' test rig and, hopefully, a selection of Mike's 'Credibility Gap' layout with some exceptional(!) track formations. The premise is that if Mike can get your stock to run over this, it will run over anything!

Paul will concentrate building and laying basic trackwork, producing good running rolling stock from kits and RTR conversions and modifying proprietary locos to P4 standards. Being a simple man his methods are of a similar ilk (generally speaking - even he is not perfect!) they do work. Paul's motto is KISS - Keep It Supremely Simple!

Please remember that we do not consider ourselves as experts but rather as 'experienced' - talk to us - it will be a very boring weekend if you don't. Remember you won't have made any mistakes that we (and many other people) won't have made already - several times!! In fact from talking to our visitors over the course of the weekend we will undoubtedly learn something new ourselves, that is the beauty of Scaleforum.

Iain Rice will be making occasional vists to the Simplifour stand to add his own experiences.

LECTURES

Once again four top modellers have been invited to share some of their secrets and techniques. The programme is as follows:

SATURDAY 12.00 hrs

Modelling Diesel Traction

Tim Shackleton

Author of the best selling book *'Modelling Diesels in 4mm Scale'*, Tim will be talking in detail about Diesels from the green era to the present day not forgetting DMUs and other esoterica

SATURDAY 14.00 hrs

Modelling in Plasticard

Geoff Kent

Geoff is well known for his expertise in plastic card for scratchbuilding and this year, he will be talking in greater detail on the subject.

SUNDAY 11.30 hrs

Simplifour

Mike Sharman & Iain Rice

More information for those of you who are starting in P4, see the panel on the left for more details

The lecture room is located off the Main Hall through the double doors next to the South Eastern Finecast stand

A. B. S. Models

39 Napier Road, Hamworthy, Poole,
Dorset BH15 4JX

Adrian Swain will have a variety of items for the 4mm modeller, including 'FourMost Models' wagon kits and the 'Streetscene' series road vehicles. The range of wagon detailing accessories has recently been expanded, so now is the time to stock up with all those essential bits and pieces for the winter modelling season.

Appleby Model Engineering

P.O. Box 104, Worcester WR5 2YZ

Renowned as a leader in the production of modern freight wagons such as Nuclear Flask carrying vehicles, John Talbot has a large range of kits, components, paints and transfers, which is constantly expanding. Wagon kits make use of resin moulded bodies with whitemetal detailing parts. Modellers of earlier periods are not forgotten and the range includes B.R., Private Owner and International wagons, dating from 1940 to the present day. Recent additions include a further selection of container carrying vehicles and containers.

Colin Ashby

7 Lee Lane East, Horsforth, Leeds
LS18 4RF

Colin produces excellent plastic injection moulded wagon kits and has taken over the former Ian Kirk range of 4mm plastic coach kits. He is in the process of upgrading and re-issuing the latter and you may find your requirements on sale here. Colin also carries a wide selection of motors and gears, plus the excellent MJT components. Look out for his PUTTERONAs, available in a variety of track Gauges, which will enable you to get it on the right track the first time!

Backwoods Miniatures

16 Reivers Gate, Morpeth,
Northumberland NE65 8IA

Pete McParlin of Backwoods Miniatures specialises in kits of Industrial and Narrow Gauge locomotives and rolling stock, with an emphasis on unusual prototypes such as the standard gauge 0-4-0+0-4-0 industrial Garratt. His kits concentrate on fidelity to the prototype – no compromise here to accommodate a convenient RTR chassis. To make motorising as easy as possible, kits include a suitable motor and a specially designed gearbox, and in some cases wheels are also included. Also on sale will be the excellent range of Porter's Cap gearboxes developed in association with High Level Models.

Blacksmith Models

44 Cove Road, Farnborough,
Hants GU14 0EN

Dave Smith of Cove Models will be on hand with his extensive range of kits and parts for finescale modellers, together with the latest additions to the 'Blacksmith model' range of etched brass kits, including the recently released GWR 56ft Clerestory Sleeper to Dia. J5.

Dave Bradwell

South Muirnich Cottage, Gorthleck,
Inverness IV1 2YP

Dave Bradwell produces an increasing range of kits for LNER enthusiasts. In addition to the J27 locomotive kit, the B1 chassis kit and the hopper wagon underframe/detailing kit, new kits in the range include the LNER group standard 4200 gallon tenders (all flat sided types) and the WD 2-8-0 locomotive. He also markets the former Malcolm Mitchell coach bogie compensation kits.

Branchlines

P.O.Box 31, Exeter, Devon EX4 6NY

Andy Mullins stocks a large selection of motors, gear boxes, and motor bogies. The latest addition to the range are the 14mm Flat 'Can' motors together with new gearboxes which Andy has developed to suit these new motors. He will be pleased to advise on your motorising problems and sell you the necessary parts. Look out also for his expanding range of locomotive and coach kits, including an 'HO' scale GCR ROD loco kit for those interested in P87.

Brassmasters Scale Models

P.O. Box 1137 Sutton Coldfield,
West Midlands B76 8FU

Following his early LNWR etched loco kits, John Jennison expanded the frontiers of kit manufacture with his LMS Black Five and Jubilee kits, which exploited the medium of moulded resin for tapered boilers and Belpaire fireboxes to take the heartache out of forming these items from sheet material. His latest kit in this mould is the LMS/BR un-rebuilt Patriot. Also on sale will be a range of turned and etched detailing components.

C. & L. Finescale

PO Box 45, Harold Hill, Essex
RM3 0DW

In addition to his ready-to-lay 18.83mm track in metre lengths, John Pottinger will also have on sale a comprehesive range of turnout templates and plastic chairs that can be used structurally with moulded plastic sleepers, or as cosmetic enhancement to the traditional rivet and ply track construction method.

Carr's Modelling Products

528 Kingston Road, Raynes Park,
London SW20

Here you will find an indispensable range of supplies for the modeller including solders, fluxes, metal blackeners and powder colours for scenery and weathering. Also on sale will be a temperature controlled iron calibrated for soldering whitemetal and Hubert Carr's indispensable booklet on soldering techniques.

Chilton Iron Works

23 Atherton Drive, Chilton Moor,
Houghton le Spring, Tyne & Wear
DH4 6TA

For those interested in modelling the railways of the north east of England, John Elliott has produced a fascinating range of chaldron and other venerable wagons, and also a number of suitable loco kits.

Chowbent Castings

P.O. Box 5, Middlewich, Cheshire
CW10 9JX

New additions to Bryan Jones' extensive range of etched brass kits are 43' and 45' Midland Railway Clayton bogies comprising the D.490 all 3rd, D.502 brake 3rd, D.513 Composite and D.526 brake composite. These are etched brass kits with brass and white metal fittings and include compensated bogies, interior and a pre-formed clip on brass roof. These had long lives in revenue service, right up to the mid fifties. Some of the brakes were converted to push-pull working and this option is also available.

Comet Models

105 Mossfield Road, Kings Heath,
Birmingham B14 7JE

From a modest start with well-thought-out preformed etched brass coach sides for use as overlays to convert ready-to-run coaches, Comet Models have expanded their range and incorporated them into complete coach kits covering a large proportion of carriages produced since the grouping. They also produce an expanding selection of chassis parts to fit proprietary loco bodies. These are available as individual parts or as complete chassis packs exclusive of wheel, gears and motor.

Crownline Models Ltd

8 Rame Terrace, Rame Cross, nr Penryn,
Cornwall TR10 9DZ

From early beginnings with a range of conversion kits and detailing parts for ready-to-run locos, Crownline have recently expanded into the production of full locomotive kits in etched brass and nickel silver. For ease of assembly, however, kits of prototypes with tapered boilers and Belpaire fireboxes have these components formed as resin mouldings. With an impressive selection of detailing parts and a rapidly expanding range of full locomotive kits a visit to the Crownline stand is a must to catch up on recent introductions and to find out about future proposals.

Dart Castings

27 Fremantle Road, High Wycombe,
Buckingshire HP13 7PQ

The Dart Castings 4mm range of whitemetal lineside detailing kits and accessories will be available, including the detailing kit for the Dapol/Mainline/Airfix GWR Autocoach now incorporated in the Hornby range of coaches. Mike Gosling will also have on sale items from the Shire Scenes range of etched brass detail kits and the Dornplas and Springside ranges together with a selection of Scale Link etches.

D. & S. Models

46, The Street, Wallington, nr. Baldock,
Herts SG7 6SW

Dan and Sylvia Pinnock will have on sale their coach and wagon kits in etched brass and whitemetal. Look out also for their accessory packs which include a variety of etchings, castings and turnings for signals, windows, axleguard compensation units and much, much more. Recent releases include the LSWR/SR Dia. 1310 open and SECR/SR Dia. 1513 cattle wagon for the Southern enthusiast, and GER/LNER suburban 4 wheel stock

– the celebrated "Jazz" sets.

Eileen's Emporium

P.O. Box 14753, London SE19 2ZH

Same name and service, but a new address and owner. Society member Roger Sawyer has taken over the business from Jim and Eileen and will be able to supply your needs from his veritable Alladin's Cave of sheet brass and nickel silver in a variety of size and thickness, wire, nuts and bolts, tube and milled sections. Add to this a comprehensive range of tools and you should be able to find all you need to stock up for the coming modelling season.

Exactoscale Ltd

29 Couchmore Ave., Esher,
Surrey KT10 9AS

As one of the pioneers of P4, Bernard Weller's stand is well worth a visit, to find out about the latest developments and Exactoscale products. His range of locomotive and rolling-stock suspension parts, screw and three-link couplings and detailed castings and etchings are second to none and the range of architectural surfaces continues to expand. At last year's Scaleforum, Bernard introduced his excellent pre-printed wagon sheets – what will he have this year?

Martin Finney

10 Heathfields Way, Shaftsbury, Dorset.
SP7 9JZ

New for Scaleforum should be kits for the LSWR/SR/BR T9 4-4-0 and 4000 gallon 8 wheel tender. There are two engine kits – one for the first 51 'narrow' engines and a second kit for the last 15 'wide' engines. The kits will build virtually all versions from circa 1900 to the last withdrawals in the 1960s. Included in the kits are parts for the engines as rebuilt with superheated boilers. With Martin's usual attention to detail, the kits include alternative front sanding arrangements, two chimneys, plain or fluted coupling rods and other detail variations. Available as an extra will be a kit to construct fully working inside motion.

Four Track Models

22 Grange Road, Harrow,
Middx HA1 2PP

Serving the finescale modeller, here you find many elusive items such as Evergreen Plastics, Kristal Kleer liquid window material, Micro Set and Micro Sol decal setting solutions, Clear Transfer Film, Water-based Varnishes and the Zap range of Superglues that really do work. Proprietor John Shelley will also have on sale his own range of FourTrack etched brass rolling stock kits and accessories together with a selection of brass and plastic kits from other manufacturers plus solders, fluxes, tools and BA brass screws and nuts.

David Geen Model Railway Kits

30 Silverwood Close, Dale Park,
Hartlepool TS27 3QF

New to Scaleforum, David Geen took over the former 51L Model Railways series of whitemetal wagon kits and has continued to expand the range to the same high standards. These kits are a must for the pre-grouping modeller and are also suitable for later periods, some prototypes lasting into BR days. The current range covers mainly the NER, L&Y and LSWR with some representatives from the Midland and LNWR. Recent additions include wagons from the GWR and LNER.

Alan Gibson

The Bungalow (Workshop),
Church Road, Lingwood, Norwich,
Norfolk NR13 4TR

Alan was one of the pioneers of etched brass locomotive kits, allied to his milled brass mainframes and a range of wheels dedicated to particular prototypes. Over the years he has added to his range of kits by taking over the products of a number of lapsed manufacturers such as MicroRail. He is currently increasing his range of 4mm loco kits with a selection of LMS prototypes, including the Stanier 2-6-0, Black Five, Jubilee and Stanier 2-8-0.

G. W. Models

2 Tall Trees, Penstone Park, Lancing,
West Sussex BN15 9AG

George Watts' wheel press and quartering jig is considered by many to be the best on the market and his range of rollers includes a Mini-mini roller which can roll boilers down to the size of a cigarette! His latest product is a rivetting tool that incorporates a geared table for precision spacing.

Hawkshill Publishing

P.O. Box 2, Chagford, Devon TQ13 8TZ

A first time visitor to Scaleforum last year, Iain Rice returns with his *Railmodel Digest* and an expanding list of modelling books. There will no doubt be special offers to enable new readers of the Digest to catch up with previous issues.

High Level Models

14 Tudor Road, Chester le Street,
County Durham, DH3 3RY

Chris Gibbons produces a range of industrial locomotive kits, a recent introduction being the R.S.H. 14" Saddle Tank which was produced in large numbers over several decades and could be found at industrial locations throughout Britain and also overseas. Kits comprise an etched brass body with compensated nickel silver chassis and specially designed gearbox. Castings are lost wax and whitemetal and full cab detail is included. Only wheels and motor are required to complete the kit mechanically. Also look out for Porter's Cap Productions gearboxes introduced in association with Backwoods Miniatures and reviewed in *Scalefour News* No. 101

Irwell Press

3 Durley Avenue, Pinner,
Middx HA5 1JS

Irwell Press produce an inexpensive range of modelling handbooks to assist you in getting the best from RTR models and kits as well as Tony Hill's invaluable book on scenery construction. They also produce a range of books on prototype subjects including the magazine *'British Railways Illustrated'* and *'Railway Bylines'*.

Isinglass Models

20 Gallants Farm Rd., East Barnet, Herts
EN4 8ET

Well known for his Isinglass range of fine drawings of coaches and locos of the LNER and its constituents, John Edgson will also have for sale a variety of kits and accessories as well as a number of completed models.

Kent Panel Controls

P.O. Box 59, Edenbridge,
Kent TN18 7AW

Here you will find the 'Kentrol+' and 'Kentrol Feedback' range of controllers together with a variety of automatic control units. Electrical accessories on sale will include transformers, switches, layout wire, connectors, LED's and miniature bulbs. Kent Panel controls also stock the full range of ECKON kits, including 'British style' yard lamps and BERKO assembled colour light signals.

London Road Models

1 The Avenue, off North Street,
Romford, Essex RM1 4DL

John Redrup's etched brass loco kits will be well known to modellers and the range continues to expand. Recent additions have included the GNR/LNER/BR K2 2-6-0 produced in association with the Great Northern Association so accuracy should be guaranteed. Hopefully the kit for the Caley single No. 123 will be on sale. This was a long lived prototype, seeing service in CR and LMS days and restored to working order by BR in the late 1950s for use on steam specials before its retirement in the Glasgow Museum of Transport. No. 123 even paid a visit to the Bluebell Railway in September 1963.

Malcolm Mitchell Design

Lower Marsh, Howard Lane, Stratton,
Bude, N. Cornwall EX23 9TE

Malcolm started the trend of fully-detailed etched loco kits designed with assembly in mind, with his GWR 44XX small prairie tank kit. His Great Western loco kits are justifiably considered to be amongst the finest on the market, and for his latest kit he has revisited the small prairie tank – this time covering the 45XX and 4575 series which had larger driving wheels. From the magnificent Castle to the humble 512 Class, if you are an enthusiast of the Great Western you are sure to find something to tempt you here.

Masokits Masterbits Range

27 Crotch Crescent, New Marston,
Oxford OX3 0JL

Mike Clark's full range of wagon brake detailing parts and springing systems for wagons and coach bogies will be on sale. New this year will be frets for SR Maunsell fitted brake gear and SR Monarch brake gear together with the re-release of the clasp brake fret, now upgraded to include the rodding.

Model Signal Engineering

P.O. Box 13, Leamington Spa,
Warwick CV31 1GN

Derek Mundy produces over 300 signalling parts, the majority of which are to 4mm scale. Here you will find parts to construct signals and associated accessories for all the main railway companies in Britain, and some overseas, together with his well known book – 'Signals for the Railway Modeller'. Derek also produces parts to construct a mechanical lever frame and his Sprat & Winkle Line remote delay auto-couplings

Parkside Dundas

Millie Street, Kirkaldy, Fife KY1 2NL

An invaluable source of goods and non-passenger rolling stock for those modelling BR in the 1950s and 1960s, the Parkside Dundas range of 4mm scale plastic kits broadly cover the period from the 1920s to very nearly the present day. Recent introductions to the range cover these extremes of period and include the LMS 20 Ton Goods Brake Van (D1657) built between 1927 and 1931, and the BR Ale Pallet wagon (diag. 1/028) converted from redundant 22 Ton Tube Wagons in the middle 1960s. Complete wagon underframe kits are available as a standard accessory, but Richard Hollingsworth and his team are happy to supply any parts from their kits to modellers who may wish to 'kit bash' or 'scratch build' particular wagons. They will be pleased to quote you prices for the parts you want on receipt of a SAE.

Phoenix Paints Co.

P.O. Box 359, Cheltenham,
Glos GL52 3YN

Phoenix Precision Paints Company will have their extensive range of Authentic Railway Colour enamels on sale together with varnishes, primers and thinners. Also available is a new range of pure sable paint brushes ranging from the diminutive 0000 to a healthy No. 6, as well as 1/4, 3/8 and 1/2" flat sable brushes – all at prices well below art shop prices. For modellers of the current scene the range includes liveries for EW&S, GNER, Virgin and Midland Mainline – all from official samples and specifications. With a current range of almost 400 colours, with more in the pipeline, almost every railway modeller's requirements can be supplied. New colours to be introduced later this year include Irish railway colours and a range of German RAL colours for German, Austrian and Swiss railways.

POWsides

March Cottage, Warehouse Road,
Stebbing, Dunmow, Essex CM6 3ST

Hugh Nichol produces an extensive range of transfer lettering for Private Owner liveries, including tank wagons, as well as lettering for a selection of railway company wagons and containers. Some liveries are also available pre-lettered onto suitable kits, e.g. Slaters, or their own polyurethane resin wagon body mouldings. Recent introductions include lettering and moulded bodies for railway containers.

Ratio Plastic Models

Hamlyn House, Mardle Way,
Buckfastleigh, Devon TQ11 0NS

Ratio will be showing their full range of 4mm scale kits – wagons, coaches, trackside buildings and accessories. These represent excellent value for money and combine prototypical accuracy with the simplicity of construction. Ideal for the newcomer to finescale modelling, they should not be overlooked by the more experienced modeller who will find much to tempt them here.

Kevin Robertson Books

4 Appleton View, East Tisted,
Alton Hants GU34 3QG

Kevin returns to Scaleforum with an extensive collection of railway books, both new and second hand, for you to browse through and purchase. Look out for the special show bargains. A selection of railway videos will also be on sale.

Roxey Mouldings

58 Dudley Road, Walton-on-Thames,
Surrey KT12 2JU

Dave Hammersley has a comprehensive range of etched brass coach kits and accessories for the Southern modeller, including the constituent companies. Other lines are not forgotten with kits for the GWR, S&DJR and Metropolitan also available.

Scalefour Stores

'Garden Cottage', Toft Road, Knutsford,
Cheshire WA16 0DR

Jeremy Suter has taken over the running of Scalefour Stores and intends to maintain the high standard of service set by Geoff and Sybil Hurley. Now is the time to study your Scalefour Stores Price List and decide what items you require. Either send Jeremy your order now and collect it at Scaleforum, or he can help you to make your selection on the day.

Set Scenes

3 Gossops Green Lane, Crawley,
West Sussex RH11 8BJ

Brian Champion's motto is 'making spaces into places' and on this stand you will find most of the necessary materials to enable you to do this. Here you can buy ground latex foam in a variety of colours and textures, a slow setting compound for general scenic modelling and a landscape construction fabric.

Sharman Wheels

Hen Efail, Golan, Garndolbenmaen,
Gwynedd LL51 9YU

Steve Hodgson's range of locomotive wheels can be justly be described as both comprehensive and economic. With a vast range of wheel diameters, spoke numbers and types, and crankpin throw you should be able to obtain the correct wheels to suit your particular prototype. Steve will also have on sale a selection of motors, gears and gearboxes together with 'Loctite' securing compound.

Shesto Ltd

Unit 2, Sapcote Trading Centre,
374 High Street, Willesden, London
NW10 2HD

Needing no introduction to Scaleforum regulars, they cover most requirements in the tool line from anvils to vices. Badger airbrushes and accessories will also be on sale. A copy of their very informative catalogue is recommended and a full mail order service is provided.

Smokey Loco Models

9 Riverhill Cottages, St Julian's Road,
Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0RT

A welcome newcomer to Scaleforum, Peter Binstead will have on sale his range of etched brass LBSC coach kits, including the set of five clerestory coaches which formed the LBSC Royal Train. New kits for Scaleforum will be a set of Stroudley Postal Vehicles and three 54'0" Billington bogie coaches. The LSWR is not, however, forgotten and a four wheel luggage van of 1887 will also be on sale. Available later this year will be the LSWR 4coach bogie block sets of 1902 - 1912 and some Postal Vehicles. All kits have compensated underframes and are complete less wheels, paint and transfers. Peter can also prepare drawings to commision and build his own or other manufacturer's models to order.

South Eastern Finecast

Glenn House, Hartfield Road, Forrest
Row, Sussex RH19 5DZ

Dave Ellis continues the process of retooling the Finecast series of locomotive kits. The latest upgrade will be the LMS Royal Scot and this should hopefully be on sale together with the full range of whitemetal locomotive kits, the Flushglaze range of windows and the Wills Scenic Series of accessories and plastic kits. Several new model railway scenic products are under development, some of which will be on display and sale.

Steam Age

P.O. Box 2004, Steyning
West Sussex BN44 3QR

Looking for that discontinued kit or out-of-print publication? You may well find your requirement here. Terry Cole has a large selection of model railway items, both new and second-hand, together with second-hand books, railway timetables and other ephemera. Steam Age will also accept commissions for building locos to OO, EM or P4 standards and examples of recent productions will be on display.

Stevenson Carriages

162 Hasland Road, Chesterfield
Derbyshire S41 0AB

Barry and Gillian have an impressive list of coach kits and accessories, with examples from the pre-grouping era up to nationalisation. The emphasis is on the LMS and its constituents, the Midland and LNWR. They also offer a carriage building service.

Wild Swan Publications Ltd.

1-3 Hagbourne Road, Didcot,
Oxon OX11 8DP

Familiar to most of us as publishers of *Model Railway Journal,* Wild Swan also produce *British Rail Journal* covering the prototype scene and an extensive range of books on both modelling and prototype subjects.

ALL TRADERS ARE SITUATED IN THE MAIN HALL

PROTOTYPE FIDELITY - PART 2

Continued from *Scalefour News* 103

By Derek Genzel 1042

The introduction of the Deputy Chairman's Cup Competition to Scaleforum a good many years ago was an innovative measure which, for the first time, put a considerable number of model locos through identical tests with a view to identifying the best performers by awarding achievement marks. The entries were first weighed complete with tenders, where applicable. Next they were tested for draw-bar pull, as previously described and then they were track tested over a layout incorporating pointwork, curves of various radii and a number of deliberately fashioned track defects, some of which were of monumental severity. The promoters of the scheme appear to have regarded it as something of a sporting occasion pure and simple, but I was not alone in feeling that the tests had a potential value far outside the competition which could provide us with essential design and construction data and enable us to build improved models. Unfortunately the data assembled at the time of the trials and later published was far too vague and incomplete to provide any useful guidance to model builders. The dbp test, in particular, led to many complaints as the top marks were awarded to the locos achieving the greatest dbps, without regard to the size of the loco, and tender locos were disadvantaged by having the tender weight included. It seemed to me that it would be valuable to weigh each axle load and determine the adhesive weight of each entry to enable the marks awarded to be based on the formula AW/dbp as this would level the playing field and end the discrimination to which the smaller locos were subject.

I knew what I wanted, a pressure pad measuring device which acted with virtually no depression under load, but it took me a number of years to find such a machine at an affordable price. I found one eventually in *Innovations Catalogue* at Christmas 1990 and proceeded to build the weighbridge around it. This was exhibited at Scaleforum 1991 at the DCC stand and many of the entries in the competition were weighed on it, as well as being weighed on the official scales. After Scaleforum I attempted to analyse the results and was quite appalled with my findings. The winning loco, which aroused much controversy as it was an American HO gauge diesel regauged to 18.83mm, returned an AW/dbp ratio of around 4 which was far and away better than any other entry, most of which lay between 10 and 20. Indeed there were two or three which had infinite ratios as they had failed to score!

This stirred up the little grey cells once again as I wanted to test out some theories I had on the importance of equalising coupled wheel loadings and I needed to measure dbps. So I built my dynamometer and tested all available locos. I built the track multi-gauge to try out the 00 and EM gauge locos owned by the Club members and found that the AW/dbp ratios obtained were nearly all within the 3.5 to 6.0 range. On test it was found that the loco moved forward a short distance under power as the spring compressed. It then came to a halt and the coupled wheels began slowly to slip. If power was increased the rate of slip increased and the spring dragged the loco back along the track and a reduced pull was recorded on the dial. If power was cut off when maximum pull was obtained the loco stopped and continued to show the same pull, (on locos equipped with non-reversible worm drives). If such a loco was pulled, with power off, to record a higher dbp, the spring pulled it back and it stopped at the previously registered maximum dbp, unless, of course, it was pulled too far initially and on return it shot past and came to a stand showing a lower value. I concluded that I was measuring the limit of adhesion of that loco on that track at that time, as it could change under different circumstances. I have to admit being surprised by Ted's performance table. Had columns P1 and P2 been reversed the results would have been very much in line with my observations.

I took both the weighbridge and the dynamometer to Scaleforum 1992 and, with the owners' consent, I weighed and tested the dbp of most of the entries in the Competition, as well as a number of other locos which were not entered. On the conclusion of the competition we compared our results. The weights were generally in agreement but the dbps differed considerably, so Alan Sibley and I then measured the base load of the dbp apparatus and we found it had an initial pull of some 4gm which was ignored during the official test. So all the dbps recorded for competition purposes were out by 4gm, and this was significant where some of the smaller locos were concerned. My subsequent analysis of the results, using both the official test figures and my own dynamometer readings, were interesting. On my machine the ratio of adhesive weight to dbp lay between 3.5 and 6.0 whilst much higher, and more scattered, ratios were returned from the official test rig. A point I noticed with the operation of the test rig was that each loco was driven, under load, for a length of about three feet and its performance was closely observed. If no slip was detected it was returned to the start and more weight was added to the pan, and so on. In many cases slip did not develop until near the end of the run and this suggested to me that it was the condition of the track at that point which was causing the slip - possibly a trace of oil on the rails. How a loco could actually start the load, and overcome the inertia, and then break into a slip some time later if the track condition remained the same was a mystery.

Allan Sibley again led the DCC Competition team in 1993 and they brought with them the new test equipment which was a highly refined version of that which I had demonstrated the year before. He very kindly presented me with a complete set of the data the team had collected and I spent nearly three months subsequently analysing it with the aid of a pocket calculator and preparing a report on my findings.

In addition to the individual axle loads, and their distribution, I looked carefully at the marks awarded for track holding as a quick inspection of the data showed there to be a close correlation between these elements. I was also very interested in the tractive effort returns as, for the first time, the locos were tested in both the pull- and the push-modes. My trials had already shown that the dbp achieved in the pull mode was a measure of the limit of adhesion of the loco and one would expect a similar figure to be recorded in the push mode as well. I was, therefore, surprised to find that this was not the case, some entries showed very large variations, the push mode efforts being considerably lower. One minute entry recorded a pull of 20gm and a push of 10gm and two or three others had results differing by more than 20%. Of the remainder two were slightly more powerful pushing, about five were roughly equal in both modes and the rest were up to 20% lower in push than in pull. The question to be answered was why there was this very marked difference in performance. I came to the conclusion that it was probably due to a misalignment between the fixed buffers on the dynamometer equipment and the loco buffers. Most buffers have slightly domed heads and if their centre lines do not meet precisely and in one straight, horizontal, line the tractive force generated by the loco will be divided into two forces, one horizontal and acting through the fixed buffers to be measured on the weighing machine, whilst the other will act vertically. If this is upwards it will tend to lift the front end of the loco and decrease its adhesive weight, thus apparently decreasing the adhesion factor. A downward component will appear to increase the adhesion factor by increasing the adhesive weight. The effect is increased if the loco body is not precisely parallel with the track. I feel that this would account for most of the locos tested returning different push and pull values, those showing the least difference probably having buffers slightly above or below the height of the fixed buffers and those with the greatest discrepancies probably not having truly levelled bodies. In marking the entries for the competition the tractive efforts are averaged, and so published, which denies us some valuable information. I think this may prove the answer to Ted's question about the different performances of two identically weighted models of the same prototype tested at Scaleforum 1994.

My studies also showed the effects of weight distribution on the track holding qualities of the locos under test. As is well known each loco under test is credited with 40 marks initially at the commencement of the track holding test and 4 marks are deducted on each occasion wheel lift is observed. A derailment costs 8 marks. With but one exception all the entries scoring full marks had a well distributed axle loading, not only of the coupled wheels but of the pony trucks or bogies as well. The exception was a 0-6-2T which had its coupled wheelbase beam compensated and drive on the rear coupled axle. The loco's c of g must have been about midway between the beam pivot point and the fixed axle as that axle was loaded to nearly the sum of the loads of the other two, making for exceptional stability. The load on the carrying wheels at the rear was minute, not more than 8gm, but it was mounted in standard axle guards with inside bearings and allowed a small amount of sideplay. The loading was transmitted by a light spring. (This was in keeping with some modifications I made to a Hornby Dublo 0-6-2T nearly 50 years ago, initially to reduce the end throw when travelling bunker first, but I also found, to my surprise, that the removal of the pony truck and the reduction of the flange depth to about 1/2mm - I had fitted 16mm diameter Romford wheels - had produced a loco which was difficult to derail).

The worst performers in the track holding test all had poor weight distribution, particularly those fitted with bogie and/or pony trucks. One in particular stuck in my mind. This was a rewheeled RTR 2-6-2T which had the following loads on the ponies:- front 2g, rear 4g. It scored 0. I was not surprised.

I was disappointed when the DCC Competition results were published to find that the bulk of the data collected had been omitted from the table leaving very little information of value to loco builders. The Competition *per se* is good fun, but whether it helps builders to construct better performing models is open to question. Now the data collected during the testing contains invaluable technical information for builders, if only it were published. Let us consider the results table in detail and see where I feel there are deficiencies:-

Col 1 Entry name. Satisfactory.

Col 2 Locomotive type. The wheel arrangement should be included in all cases.

Col 3 Model. It would be helpful to know whether the kits are whitemetal or not.

Col 4 Total weight. This includes the weight of the tender. It is only in the case of tender locos not equipped with carrying wheels that it is possible to determine the actual weight of the tender. The load borne by pony trucks or bogies is unknown. Tender weights deduced vary from 92g up to 282g and are far from consistent. Where tank locos are concerned, those with two sets of carrying wheels have indeterminate axle loads on those axles.

Col 5 Adhesive weight. This is the sum of the measured axle loads of the coupled axles and provides no information about weight distribution.

Col 6 Tractive effort. This is the average of the efforts recorded in the pull and push modes, and is questionable. It might be improved if the loco buffered up to a flat plate in the push mode in order to overcome any problems associated with small discrepancies in buffer height. Levelling errors would still be recorded. I would prefer to see the tractive efforts in both modes recorded separately.

Col 7 Ratio of AW/TE. This should read TE/AW. This figure x 50 and rounded produces the point score. As mentioned previously I prefer the ratio AW/TE because I am accustomed to it and I don't like all those damned dots! Cols 8 - 11

Col 8 should be headed TE/AW.

The next three columns relate to mechanical performance and possibly reflect the accuracy of fitting and electrical collection. At one time it was the practice to mention the types of motors employed and this was useful information.

Col 12 Track holding. This is a very valuable set of figures and would be even more valuable if the weight distribution figures were published. It would be instructive if the number of points lost due to both wheel lift and derailment were to be shown.

Another piece of information which would be valuable is the form of suspension embodied in each entry. This would help us to decide on the form of suspension we will adopt in future models.

The information given in Ted's table showing the axle weights and the forms of suspension fitted are what we need.

Ted has become involved with questions of scaling and has been surprised by the answers he has received from his physics student friend. Much of what he has discovered is discussed in the *Scalefour Digest* 21.1, already mentioned, pages 10-13. It is common practice to refer to our scale as 1/76.2, and then we become confused if we use this ratio everywhere and find the answers don't work. In fact, of course, this ratio is nothing more than the base and applies only to linear measurement. Areas are the product of two linear dimensions and the ratio is R^2, whilst volumes are the product of three linear dimensions and the ratio is R^3. Mass is a function of volume, (we call it weight) so scale weight is prototype weight x $1/R^3$ and this produces our scale ton as equal to approximately 2.3g.

There are, of course, certain functions which cannot be scaled. Gradients are one, we can scale the length and the height, but the angle of inclination remains the same. Another is the force of gravity which remains the same regardless of size or mass, hence any expression involving g is unscaleable. Acceleration is one such since it involves the rate of acceleration due to gravity in its expression and the scale ratio is $1/R^0 = 1$.

This brings us to time, which is scaleable. Again it is a function of R raised to a power, but in this case it is $R^{1/2}$, or the square root of R. So 1 scale minute is about 6.87 seconds in duration. If a full size train and a model leave at the same time they will accelerate at the same rate. If the big one accelerates for three minutes the model will accelerate for 20.6 seconds and will cover the same scale distance as the first does in its time. This intriguing matter may also be examined by considering the construction of a scale-model pendulum clock. The rate of swing of a pendulum is governed by its length, the shorter it is the faster it will swing. The model's pendulum will be of scale length, therefore it will swing faster and calculation shows that this will be to the ratio of $R^{1/2}$. We do, of course, witness these effects on our models and grumble because they do not look right - the swing of our coupling links, the sway of our vehicles along the track, the abruptness of our signal movements and point operation, for example - but if we film them in slow motion format at the correct scale speed and then play them back at normal speed they look right.

[Difference between mass and weight: a spring or torsion balance measures weight (ie force), whereas a beam balance measures mass. Mass does not deform track - weight does! Ed]

MEMBERS MARKET PLACE

For Sale:

Perseverence LSWR M7 0-4-4T chassis kit + Sharman P4 drivers and bogie wheels. Bogie part built, frames reduced in length for short frame variant (non push/pull) £10.00

Ian Kirk SR 2-BIL kit + Branchlines detailing kits. Part built (more details on request) - no wheels, floors or motor bogie. £25.00

Wills LBSCR E2 0-6-0T whitemetal body kit. Part built but now disassembled. Some small detail parts missing. £10.00

MSE Spratt & Winkle 3mm/4mm finescale auto couplings (etch only - AC3/3) £2.50

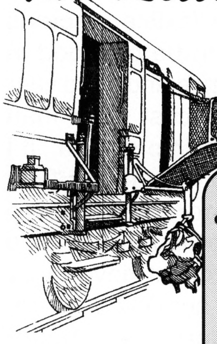
SE Finecast Flushglaze windows - SE6 (for Lima Class 26/27/33) and SE11 (for Hornby Class 47) £1.00 each

Craftsman detailing kit for Hornby Class 47 + Railmatch round exhaust port. £2.00

Ian Kirk SR bogies. FREE (if anyone actually wants them!)

Richard Benn - 0171-281-9544
or e-mail to:
Richard@fullerbenn.demon.co.uk

The Letters Pages



Letters are welcome on any topic but may be edited. *Noms-de-Plume* must be accompanied by name and address. Letters from non-Members are published at the Editor's discretion

RE COMPANY STATUS

From John Green No 5260

In regards to the company status discussion/decision, I would like to add an unqualified point of view! In a nut shell, the original arguments seemed to be:

Pros - protection of ordinary members and committee members against liability Cons - significant but not unreasonable costs.

As an ordinary member I accepted this view as one of wisdom.

However, *Scalefour News* 103 and the letters accompanying it have led me to reconsider. This is because I am yet to read the precise nature of the perceived risks to members. That litigation could be threatened (and presumably pursued) is no doubt true. The problem I am having is in understanding why company status is the right step to take. If the risks are small, various and unknown (nobody has yet been precise about scenarios), how can we possibly know that the expense of achieving company status is not just a waste of society funds. Could not the liability situations that company status are thought to protect us from, be insured against? Presumably it would not be too difficult to check out the legal status advantages of company status and cost the required changes to the existing insurance policies for Scalefour Stores, and Society exhibitions already held. It has also been pointed out that it is important to get the company documentation right first time, or extra expense would be incurred later. It seems to me that the change to company status as well as incurring a not insignificant expense is not very flexible, whereas insurance cover can be changed in light of both experience and need year by year at no extra cost other than the resulting change in premium. If I may quote from the AGM report "The problem with more extensive insurance was knowing in advance what eventualities might have to be covered." I cannot actually see how company status would be a better alternative, it would not be a "cover all policy", but may indeed leave us complacent and actually create one or two problems over liability for the future. A hopefully far-fetched example might be a significant fall in enrolment or a schism, either of which could leave a much smaller Society left with the financial burden of Company status.

It might open up the debate (and help it reach a correct conclusion) to speculate what we might be protecting ourselves against. The legal threat quoted in the AGM report by Chris Longley made against another society for unpaid debts is an interesting one. Put quite simply, no one in the society should ever be in the position where they incur expenses that the society has not authorised and cannot be covered. If some rogue ever did this, it is quite right and proper that they face the consequences individually and not the society as a whole. Well, what about expenses being incurred quite innocently ? For example, what about goods being ordered by Stores that cannot be paid for? Presumably a similar situation to what happened in the club referred to by Chris Longley? This should never happen, Stores should be keeping its own account, should be given a float and should keep itself in the black within this float. Cheques should not be written that exceed the float, unless the float is expressly extended by committee (and can be covered by existing Society funds). This is just normal prudent book keeping. Presumably this is already done. The normal membership does not want a Society where individuals can take the Society into the red to the point of litigation and then be protected against the consequences.

Let's look at the potentially more hazardous venture of organising an exhibition. One possible scenario is an exhibition being arranged, expenses incurred and the exhibition hall owner being corrupt, or going bankrupt, or the hall burning down a week before the show. This is exactly the sort of situation we can insure against. In fact in this sort of case I don't see how company status would help the Society get its money back anyway. Perhaps the people we ought to seek advice from on such a matter are any members involved in professional show management.

The other type of danger is litigation involving personal accident or loss. This can and I am sure is insured against for members and visitors to exhibitions. In the case of motor cars, cover is arranged so that costs and claims are covered even when the driver is completely negligent and/or criminally responsible (although it does not protect him/her against the sentence passed by the courts). It would presumably be possible to upgrade existing exhibition cover to cover everyone who has anything to do with the Society to the point of covering negligence in this way, should the committee feel it to be necessary, in fact existing cover probably goes most of the way along this road already.

Litigation in this area still seems very rare, so what is the question we are being asked? It is a dry climate, do we check the existing roof for leaks that might let the rain in at minimal expense or do we pay for a second expensive roof above the first which is unproven but promises to be meteorite and alien proof?

The question is, can anyone actually give a concrete scenario in which company status has intrinsic merit? It may be that there are such scenarios or even legal precedents for such scenarios, but we are yet to hear of them. If the pro camp cannot be more solid than hint at litigation risks which are at this time unknown, lets decide to double check the insurance cover and drop the Company status idea at least for the moment.

We can then live content in the knowledge that we have avoided the expense and devote all of *Scalefour News* to finescale modelling once again.

[While we are obviously happy to publish correspondence on this subject, it seems appropriate to remind members that your Committee was authorised, by a very large majority of those members who attended the 1997 AGM, to further pursue the advantages and disadvantages of this proposition and, to report back to a future AGM or SGM with detailed proposals should they feel it to be advantageous to the Society - Ed]

RE WHEELSETS.

From Geoff Hurley 5069

I have read a copy of the letter from Murray Angus complaining about the quality of wheelsets from established manufacturers and it has been necessary for him to reject about 40% of the wheels purchased.

I have until recently been the Trade Officer for the Society responsible for the purchase of wagon and coach wheels for the stores. Upon taking over the stores some three years ago the Society used to be supplied by wheels from Kean/Maygib until the supply dried up and I was no longer able to obtain wheels from this supplier. (I still have an outstanding order with this firm well over two years old) From the information available to me, railway products took second place to other engineering requirements.

I then approached Alan Gibson to supply the Society with the required wheels: this he has done for the last two to two and a half years. Delivery has always been within a few days of me placing the order. In this time I have probably sold in the region of 1500-2000 packets, that being approximately 4000 axles and in this time I have had two packets back, one because the was no wheel rim on the plastic centre; the second was where the customer had tried to re-profile the pin point axle. This tells me one of two things - that there are a lot of satisfied customers out there, or that there are a lot of wagon and coach wheels lying on the shelves along with those loco kits we all want to build. Surprisingly in this time I have also had the same number of complaints about Portescap motors.

Anyway that's a bit of the history surrounding the supply of wheels to the Society, Murray Angus doesn't identify the manufacturer of his coach and wagon wheels but from his comment I presume he means either Alan Gibson or Kean/Maygib. During my time as Trade Officer there have always been rumblings about the quality of wheels, "I don't like this type, or I much prefer so and so's", and I believe that it is usually the customer preference to a particular manufacturer than the actual quality of the wheel, both Alan Gibson and Kean/Maygib produce a wheelset of more than acceptable quality at the price you, the customer, will pay. Both manufacturers will gladly replace any defective wheelset. That comes to another problem area: should we be the quality control for the manufacturer - would you sit there for peanuts assembling wheelsets for hours upon hours? I doubt it. Yes, there is the likelihood of a few errant wheels slipping through, and probably more than my two complaints,but certainly less than a 40% rejection rate. My own experience with the outside world on quality control has been abysmal. I know. I have been the quality control on the purchase of a £10,000 plus new caravan!

Lets look at the cost of a wheelset. £1.35 for two axles from the Society Stores, take away the V.A.T. , which leaves us with a price of £1.15 , that's less than 60p per axle. Pin point axles are usually bought in by the manufacturer, and are produced by a firm specialising in the production of watch and clock spindles so, in actual fact, our pin point axle is a clock spindle with a precision taper at each end which in fact is not a pin point but does actually have a small radius at the end. I do not know the price of these actual axles, but I do know the price of turned brass rivets from our commercial supplier - expensive. I will quote the average price I have been given of the machine to produce these axles, some £50,000, a figure I think well beyond the means of our average cottage industry. Then we have the price of the plastic centre, the mould for producing these and the injection moulding process, not forgetting the steel tyre which for our purposes has to have a high fidelity profile. Someone then has to assemble all the fiddly little parts together. Whether this is done manually or is automated I do not know but whichever way, I certainly ain't going to sit there putting wheels together for less than a king's ransom. Somehow our 60p per axle seems quite cheap to me.

During my time as Trade Officer I was approached by an engineering firm to see if they could produce wheels to the Society. I quoted what was the required standard and the amount of money per annum that was likely to be spent on wheels - to date the firm has not returned to me.

Ultrascale wheels: I have spoken to Brian Rogers on numerous occasions for the supply of wagon and coach wheels for the Society but due to production problems this was not possible. We had discussed a small production run; the price per axle would have resulted somewhere in the region of £2.50 per axle, (V.A.T. and a small profit for the Society). From straw polls some members would have been prepared to pay this price, others not. At present this is where the situation remains. I have been unable to obtain a supply of wheels from Ultrascale and suggest that if members require Ultrascale wheels they approach them direct, there no longer being a minimum £50.00 order.

Due to the rumbling I have spoken to Alan Gibson about wheel quality and he assures me that every component is checked and assembled as best as can be, but like any mass produced product errors can occur and he is more than happy to exchange any faulty item purchased from him. Yes, wheelsets can be produced more error free and to a higher standard but at a price. Alan Gibson supplies the continent with P87 wheels at a price. This is a conversation I have had with other manufacturers/traders - the price the continentals have to pay for their wheelsets is up to £10.00 for a pair of axles. Are we getting models railways on the cheap or are the continentals being ripped off? Compare the price of loco kit manufacturers in the UK and on the continent, I know which prices I prefer paying.

Murray Angus then advocates that tests should be made on all available rolling stock wheels. Thats fine but, contrary to popular belief, the Society does not have the financial clout that people seem to expect. We are a minority group in the model railway world, and what is seen as a large outlay to the Society is but small business to manufacturers, Kean/Maygib is one to quote. Why do Hornby, Bachmann or Replica not produce anything in 18.83? Because it is commercially not viable. Alan Gibson and Ultrascale certainly would go out of business if they had to rely on supplying wheels to 18.83mm gauge.

Whilst this is my own personal opinion and in no way do I take a fawning attitude to manufacturers. I am grateful to all manufacturers, Alan Gibson, Ultrascale, Brassmasters, Messers Finney and Mitchell and others, who supply and take into consideration my requirement to model in 18.83mm gauge and if all it takes is a little fettling on an occasional error to achieve a perfect component then so be it. Whilst it may appear abhorrent to some people I do believe we get excellent value for money in the 4mm railway world and probably get it on the cheap.

This is in no way to say that the production of shabby goods should be acceptable, and I do concur that a problem may arise with a new member who has been seduced into the world of fine scale modelling and he is then the unfortunate person to receive a duff set of wheels, his approach would be one of that 18.83mm gauge doesn't work. However I believe that scenario to be unique as most P4 railway modellers have come from other gauges and are well able to rectify small faults. Whilst, in an ideal world, I would like all my components to be spot on, but if there are a few production faults that I can live with, it is far better that supplies be available than not at all. We all know what happened to Proscale kits. Market forces will let us know if the product is successful - if you don't like it you don't buy it, but please do not let us go back to the stage of having to scratch build all our components, because of what I believe is some undeserved criticism of a 60p axle

RE LOCO PERFORMANCE

From Arthur Budd 4690

I have been following the correspondence in *Scalefour News* about loco performance and the DCC with much interest especially with regards to the comments about the two Manning Wardle models in the 1994 competition as I was the builder of the 'other' one. Having looked again at the results as published in issue 90 of *Scalefour News*, I remember that at the time I was amazed that two similar models could produce such startlingly different results, and it was interesting to read Ken's explanation in issue 103. Strangely my MW suffers the one wheel out-of-true syndrome too, but obviously not to the same extent. This was (and is) sufficient to give the loco a somewhat endearing 'Limping Lulu' gait, but as it scored 101 points in the DCC this obviously doesn't affect its running unduly and so it is unlikely to be corrected.

As a novice scratchbuilder at the time I thought this problem was due to my ineptitude whilst bushing the wheels for the undersized axles, but now I wonder if there might have been a batch of eccentric MW wheels around at the time of the MRJ project. It would be interesting to know if other people had similar problems.

This little loco, a photo of which appeared in issue 71 of *MRJ*, is still my only P4 effort so far and is still unpainted but the experience gained has proved invaluable in other loco building projects in various scale/ gauge combinations since.

RE REVIEWS ARTICLE AND REVIEW OF GCR 10T VAN BY STEVE BANKS

From Allan Sibley 1254

At the beginning of his article on kit reviews, Steve Banks refers to the consumer magazines for other products, such as *What Camera?* and *What Car?* Apart from the obvious differences between a camera or a car and a model railway kit, there is one fundamental distinction. Taking the car example, the potential buyer will generally not have a specific make or model in mind to the exclusion of all others (unless he's buying a Morgan!). All cars of a given type and price range do the same job, so it really matters not whether you buy a Rover, a Vauxhall or a Ford. The final choice is most likely influenced by price, location of dealership, and previous experience. The same is not true with model kits. I recently built an Ivatt class 4 2-6-0 from the pretty horrendous Millholme kit. I could have had a much better 2-6-0 from a Finecast K3, a Mitchell 43xx or a DJH 76xxx. The point is that I didn't just want any mixed traffic mogul - I wanted a model of a specific prototype. Other than scratchbuilding, I was faced with the Millholme kit or nothing. With a few exceptions we have no choice in our starting point for a particular model (except scratchbuilding), thus we have to make alterations to what is available instead of opting to buy an alternative kit of the same vehicle.

Some years ago I discovered a major fault with the saddle tank casting of an 'O' gauge loco kit. I wrote to the manufacturer, pointing out the error. After a while he wrote back, saying that he had realised the mistake in the pattern making. I asked if he was going to revise the pattern and produce new castings. The reply was (predictably) 'no', as was the answer to my request for a refund. As a result I could not build the kit into an accurate model of its prototype. But the kit could be built (and was) into a model which ran perfectly and looked OK to the untutored eye. I wonder how the law would interpret the Sale Of Goods Act in such a case?

From Jan Frelin 5170

Regarding the thought-provoking article by Steve Banks on kit reviews in *Scalefour News* 103, I have a few comments. I do agree with its general undercurrent - that many reviewers tend to be overly kind to their subjects. I also believe that his methodical approach of clearly judging the kit in several areas (prototype accuracy, level of detail, quality &c) has merit in general. However, there are parts of his discussion of quality and detail where I would like to make some further comments. It's mostly a matter of expectations and goals, but I think that an etched kit that sets out to 'only deliver the etched bits' of a project can be of high quality regardless of the fact that it might be missing some of the parts that would be considered essential for a complete kit. As long as this is stated clearly, I believe it's fine if it is reflected in the price. It is of high quality within the limits of what it sets out to do, so to speak.

I'm considering trying out these methods on a project I'm currently building, to see if I can write an actual review to these standards. (It is not likely to be published in these hallowed pages, as it concerns a Swedish narrow gauge 2-8-0T in 3.5mm scale, by DJH.) I was rather impressed by the 'example review' Steve Banks provided. Some of his ideas were made clearer by it.

Another question, pertinent to any editor, is where do you find the reviewers to write these fine reviews. I believe that higher demands can be placed on those that write solicited material for payment, than those that offer their free time for Society publications.

[This particular topic has been the subject of considerable debate on the 'On-line' Discussion Group for Society members on the Internet, the style of much of which discussion would appear disjointed in contiguous written form. However Jan Frelin's contribution (above) was written with publication in mind, and Rupert Brown's comments, which follow, with a little 'editing', are suitable, with his consent, for inclusion. This does not imply that the other 'electronic' contributions are not equally worthy of publication, but just that, by their very nature, turning them into a meaningful readable form is not overly practicable. - David Lane]

From Rupert D.E. Brown 2874

Before wading in I think I should put in a couple of caveats 1) I know Steve pretty well 2) I am both a kit designer (RDEB Kits) and builder.

The biggest problem we have in the hobby today is that there is no realistic scale for reviewing kits. In particular I'm sure the finescale end of the hobby has lost many novices who have wanted to build a model of their favourite prototype and been put off by some real horror kits (e.g. MTK).

At the moment I'm building a Finney 7mm A1 kit and if it wasn't for the size and complexity of the prototype I could almost recommend it to a beginner as everything FITS (NB exclamation).

The biggest problem that manufacturers face is the cost of tooling kits - For complex castings only whitemetal is viable and there is natural shrinkage in the process. For flat surfaces etching is the most economic and 'accurate' process but designers must compensate for fold lines and material thickness & quality (this is non trivial).

For commercial kit manufacturers there is a very great temptation not to correct artwork or masters as the margins are very tight. In my own case I'm really scratchbuilding on a computer and selling my kits as beer money - the day job will always pay much better.

Bill [Bedford] is right to question the variability in the skill level and expectations of the reviewer *[The rest of this paragraph had particular reference to the 'on-line' discussion and is accordingly omitted -Ed]*

Perhaps the way to solve this is to have a review committee to which all reviews including photos during assembly are 'reviewed' as a check/ balance to level up standards. The problem then is that as modellers when we see a new kit come out we want to know quickly what it's like - of course we all have a gut feel depending on the manufacturer, each of whom has a well defined style.

With the advent of the Internet and digital photography it should now be much easier to produce 'cyber' reviews' - all we need now is an agreed format and a web site.

The GOG also have a good 'gents agreement' about quality with much of their trade, many of whom are also members, via their technical subcommittee - I recently resolved a quality issue by this mechanism. A bit of discreet policing by all scale Societies with liaison to magazine editors and show managers could do a lot to improve things too

RE HYWELL REES' LETTER IN *SCALEFOUR NEWS* 103 'RE P87'

From Allan Sibley 1254

I suspect that his Danish friend is in a very small minority. I cannot envisage many European modellers turning their backs on the tremendous range of excellent HO products in 3.5mm scale. Most will be using locomotives and rolling stock from Fleischmann, Roco, etc., which are exquisite models apart from those ghastly wheels! Citing Flintfields in the context of Hywel's letter is somewhat misleading - it may be a European-built model but it is of a British railway using British-sourced products! Incidentally, all the recent P-87 correspondence has been about European modelling. Are there any other members (apart from Michael Larcombe) working in P-87 on American models?

From Jan Frelin 5170

On the subject of P87, I would like to make some comments on the letter from Hywel Rees regarding the suitability of P4 for continental prototypes. While the RTR trade certainly don't offer much relevant material for my planned layout of Uddevalla in the 1920s either, there are many in our local cottage industry that do. I only expect to have to scratch build a few wagons, about 50% of the passenger stock, and a few of the more obscure engines. The rest are, or will be, offered as kits. Should I choose P4, everything would have to be scratch built. I just don't have the time for that, even if the slightly increased size would be beneficial. Flintfields is of course a wholly different affair - I would certainly use P4 for British prototypes if I would build them, really for the same reason. That's where you find what the trade has to offer.

RE DAVID LANE'S 'QUICKTIPS 103'

From Allan Sibley 1254

You do not need to perform surgery on a clutch pencil to achieve the gadget for picking up screws. Just buy a 'Pearl Grip Pick-Up Tool' from Squires Model And Craft Tools (catalogue ref. TWO100, price £2.95).

(With respect to Allan, I have one very similar tool, perhaps even the same, as it matches the illustration in Squire's catalogue, but I find the three springy arms do not grip the screw/nut firmly enough, whereas the 'developed' clutch pencil does- David)

RE DEREK GENZEL'S 'PROTOTYPE FIDELITY - PART 1'.

From Allan Sibley 1254

Given the short time between the arrival of *Scalefour News* 103 and the deadline for 104 (three days! *[Sorry about that - the need to await AGM reports, and DL deserting his keyboard for a week resulting in delayed printing, together with imminent holidays brought the deadline only 3 days forward. Ed]* I haven't fully digested the article, but two points struck me immediately.

Firstly, Derek refers to an article entitled 'To Beam Or Not To Beam' by Roy Birch. In fact that was the overall title given by the then editor, Mike Williams, to two articles, one by Roy and one by myself. In these we each explained our theories on compensation and springing, and how we put them into practice. In both cases we started at a fairly basic level which the newcomer to P4 could understand. But that was twelve years ago, and recently-joined members will probably not have access to that issue of *Scalefour News* and those in which the follow-up correspondence was published. They are thus confronted with a highly-technical treatise which is pretty incomprehensible for an experienced loco builder, so how daunting it must be for the relative newcomer. If ever an article needed a better background to its origins and a few well-drawn explanatory diagrams it is this one. A couple of years ago I met a recently recruited member who was so put-off by reading a similar treatise that he just gave up railway modelling altogether. Perhaps all of us more experienced modellers (and the Editors too) should give more consideration to this aspect when publishing such articles. You might like to bear this in mind with part 2 and however many parts may follow it. *[Part 2 appears in this issue - it is the final part. Ed]*

RE USING MAGNADHESION TO GAIN EXTRA POINTS IN THE DCC

From Allan Sibley 1254

If anyone is thinking of doing this, don't bother. The DCC track uses nickel-silver rail!

FROM THE AREA GROUPS

REPORTS AND NEWS

KENT AREA GROUP

This is a newly-established group, catering for members in mid and east Kent. All society members in the county east of a line running from the Medway towns to Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells were canvassed - the response to my questionnaire totalled about 50% of the total number of 45 sent out, and indicated that an area group based around Maidstone and Ashford was a viable proposition with an initial interested core of around ten people. Thanks are also due to those members who sent good wishes for the group's future, even though they were unable to support it directly.

At the time of writing we have held two meetings, the first just to meet and introduce each other, and the second to explore a little more the possibility of constructing a group layout of some kind, something that was high on the 'wants' list of those attending. We are fortunate enough to have a wide range of expertise to draw on, including two members who have been modelling in P4 almost as long as it has existed, and two who have a well-established finescale 00 layout on the circuit. At the other end of the spectrum are people like myself with the proverbial little experience, bold plans for the future and cupboards full of unopened kits! All in all a good and promising balance. We also have Society secretary Mike Ainsworth, who has accepted the post of group treasurer (to give him some practice for the financial supremo role for Scaleforum 1997).

Some discussion on developing criteria for a group layout project has already taken place. After discounting some of the more obscure ideas, such as a layout based on broad gauge in Argentina (let someone criticise that for authenticity!) and a layout in black and white to avoid those awkward model colour problems (well, *BRILL* gets away with it), we have so far settled on the following: i) it should be capable of being built in individual and compatible modules, for ease of transport, security and work flexibility; ii) it should primarily be for our own enjoyment, although the possibility of exhibiting should not be ruled out; iii) it should be based on 1950s / early 1960s practice somewhere on the Southern (surprise, surprise) and probably covering the area of joint influence between the 'Chatham' and the 'Brighton'; iv) it should have at least three rails (?); and v) it should represent some imaginary secondary double track line. By the time you read this, we should have firmed up on most strategic issues and be developing designs.

We also intend to organise talks and visits (both model and prototype). Meetings generally take place on the first Thursday of each month, although the venue is not necessarily fixed (but may become so). New members are welcome - please contact Roderic Cameron (details on 'Blue Sheet' amendments at the front of this issue).

Roderic Cameron 4298

NORTH LONDON GROUP

"It's Rhymney Time!" - In May, Jonathan David, the HMRS Rhymney Railway steward, came from nearby Harpenden and gave us a presentation on the Rhymney Railway. Despite being 'pronounciationally challenged' by some of the place names, Jonathan set the scene by attempting to unravel that web of rivalry and intrigue spun by the Pre-Grouping railways in the Cardiff and eastern valleys of South Wales. He highlighted the role and routes of the Rhymney Railway and told of its battles with the Bute Docks and the Cardiff, Taff Vale and Barry Railways. We then looked at some of the stations in more detail, particularly Nelson and Llancaiach, which Jonathan has been researching with a view to building a layout.

After coffee, Jonathan moved on to give us a flavour of the locomotives owned by the Rhymney. Up to the early part of this century, Cornelius Lundie ruled the roost with his preference for outside-framed saddle tanks. The features of Lundie's designs could be seen in the EM gauge model of a 'K' class 0-6-2 saddle tank which Jonathan had on display. Modern side-tank designs, including the 'R' class, were built following the appointment of C T Hurry Riches as Locomotive Superintendent in 1904. (Although only 15 'R' class were built by the Rhymney, real Rhymney enthusiasts know there were 215 in service by 1928 as the ' Western were so impressed with this class that they arranged for 200 copies to be built using standard Swindon parts where possible and then tried to pass them off as the GWR Standard class 56xx.). Jonathan finished off with a review of passenger and goods stock, with particular reference to goods brake vans. Jonathan's talk was well received by NLG members; his easy style and detailed subject knowledge reaching out to entertain those of us who have (or had) no declared interest in South Wales railways. It may well be that Jonathan is booked to appear at a HMRS Area Group meeting near you. My advice is go and listen - you won't be disappointed!

Summer Saturday Special - The Watford and District MRC held their first summer model railway show at Harrow on 28th June 97. They chose the title 'Summer Saturday Special' to distinguish it from their established Finescale Extravaganza which is held each year in November. Phil McGovern set out to produce a quality model railway show with layouts and specialist traders drawn from the Home Counties.

NLG members were out in force. Paul Moore and I took Brockley Hill and were joined by Tony Osmond and Derek Smith. Chris Longley brought Mere for good measure. John Shelley was there with Fourtrack Models and the father and son team of Dennis and John Redrup manned the London Road Models stand. Also present were Ray and Cida Earl with Lakey Hill and Colin Wilson of EMGS Ltd. fame with Fursenhall. There were no 'OO' layouts of any description or any "Pile it high - sell it cheap" RTR merchants.

Compared to the Extravaganza, this was a small affair. However, the quality and characteristic friendliness were there and the food, licensed bar, on-site parking and general facilities at the Kodak Sports and Social Club, Harrow, were excellent. There were no barriers around the layouts and everyone I spoke to enjoyed themselves. The Watford club were pleased with the attendance figures and are discussing the possibility of doing it again next summer.

Coming Attractions - Tony Osmond and 'team' will be taking Brockley Hill to Scaleforum in

September 97 and subject to final confirmation, Croydon in October 97 and Wigan in December 97. Bodmin should be appearing at Beaconsfield the weekend after Scaleforum 97.

For the benefit of those of you who might like to see Ray Hammond's layout Thursford again, Ray has provided me with the following list of exhibitions but stresses that not all these dates have been confirmed. To avoid potential disappointment, you are advised to check with the show organisers or their literature nearer the time. The venues and dates are: Weymouth in September 97, Railex at Aylesbury in October 97, Holtwhite MRC at Enfield in November 97, Ongar in February 98, Scaleforum North in March 98, Hoddesdon in September 98, Ipswich in November 98, Romford in March 99 and Colchester in October 2000. Quite a list, isn't it!

And Finally... - Brian Clark recently remarked that there are now two NLG meetings in May. There is our official meeting on the last (non Bank Holiday) Monday of the month and there is EXPO-EM which is now recognised as a May meeting place for NLG members. I don't propose to say much about EXPO-EM because it was covered in *Scalefour News* 103. However, Ambergate struck me as the likely winner of 'Best Layout' the moment I saw it and has been added to my personal short list of truly awe-inspiring layouts. For interest the others on my list are: The Vale Scene at Pendon, Chee Tor, the extended version of Pulborough and the Model Railway at the end of the Promenade at Weston-Super-Mare. (Who else remembers that one?).

Hywel Rees 3833

SARUM FINESCALE GROUP

I offered, honestly, offered to write a report of Group activities, without the least bit of coercion.

Firstly I would like to dispel the impression given, stated even, in previous reports, that the group members do nothing but talk. True, the meetings are of a social nature; it is not easy to do serious modelling in somebody else's living room.

David Lane is well known for his work in the Scalefour Society. Mark Bowman produces a stream of P4 diesels. Don Haddock has a layout that would be the envy of 95% of Society members. Lawrence Roberts ought to enter his models in Scaleforum competitions, and I make the Electromagnets noted in MRJ and the Digest 5.5.1(2).

Recent meetings have been very successful, numbers reaching a peak of seventeen, which was a bit of a squeeze. Joe Newman gave an interesting talk on GWR Minks which was greatly enhhanced by his having to hand his 4mm scale models of most types that existed. My own slide show on Chemin de Fer du Vivarais was brought forward by a month to allow Alan Ely to complete the preparation of his illustrated lecture on the Southern's Merchant Navies. It was well worth the wait. I would not have believed that interest could have been maintained for two hours if I had not been there. As a result Alan is provisionally booked to do a repeat for Salisbury Club. Somewhat condensed! (*Alan is also now in similar demand elsewhere -Ed*)

Dickie Paget, of the East Dorset 'Gang of Four', gave an excellent presentation, with slides and examples, of the construction methods used in signals he has made for Flintcombe. Worth a visit to Scaleforum just to see those.

Enough reporting; I have a mass of 'OO' (sorry!) points to make for the Salisbury Club's new layout. For details of future meetings, on the first Wednesday evening of each month, contact David Lane

Martin Moss 4092

ECWWAG

Any suggestions for a less cumbersome name?

Since 'on-line' numbers are now into three figures, I have decided to discontinue the listing of newcomers addresses as from this Issue, apart from amendments, of which there is one to note, being an address change for James Easthope, (2843), new address being <James@pito.org>. Any member who would like a current list of 'connected' members should e-mail me at <s4soc@dial.pipex.com> and I'll 'attach' a list in either ASCII or .XLS (spreadsheet) format to a reply e-mail. Please specify format desired. Should your e-mail address change please be sure to advise me so that this listing may be kept up-to-date. New members for the Society resulting from the Web site are now into double figures.

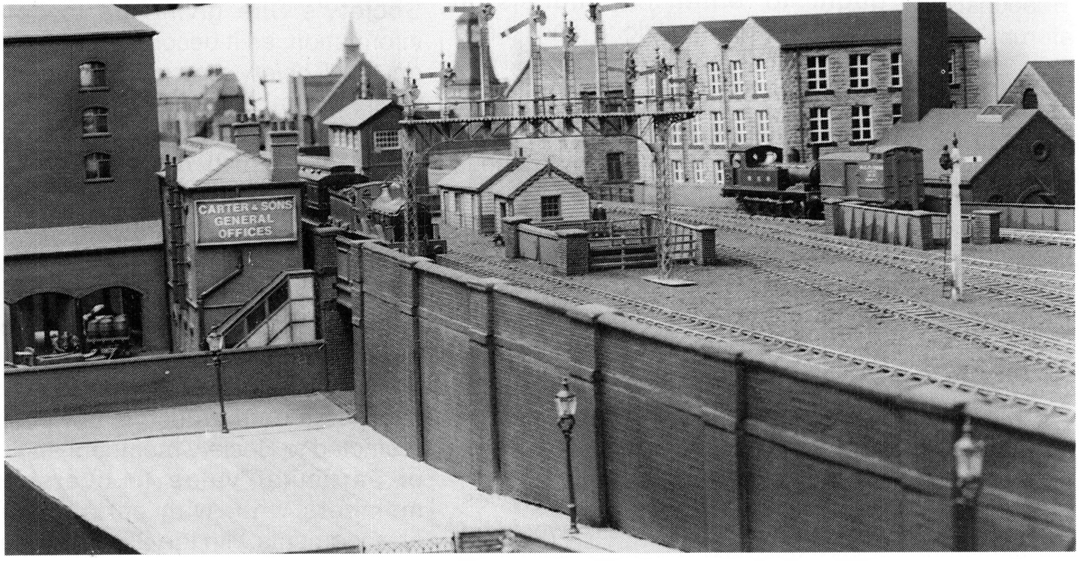
A new 'page' has been added to the Society's Site giving up to date information, as it becomes available, on the Society's own Exhibitions - Scaleforum obviously being the subject just now, but also with some Scalefour North data becoming available. To go straight to it, add 'socshows.htm' to the end of the URL.

The Society's Stores List is also now available on the Web Site (with particular thanks to Richard Benn for his assistance, and also to the small and invaluable group of 'testers' who checked it out). Its use is obviously restricted to Society members and is of particular value to overseas members who, with certain pre-arrangements with the Stores Officer can submit orders via e-mail through me - note that this is a facility restricted to overseas members only. It is accessed through the Home Page, and, in the same manner as for the Shows Page, can also be accessed direct by adding 's4strs.htm' to the basic URL. There is also a completable 'on-screen' stores order form. Unfortunately we are not in a position to handle automatically submitted 'on-line' orders, so that an order form has to be printed and submitted in the orthodox fashion.. For those of you with Web access this Page also serves to provide up-to-date prices and availability information.

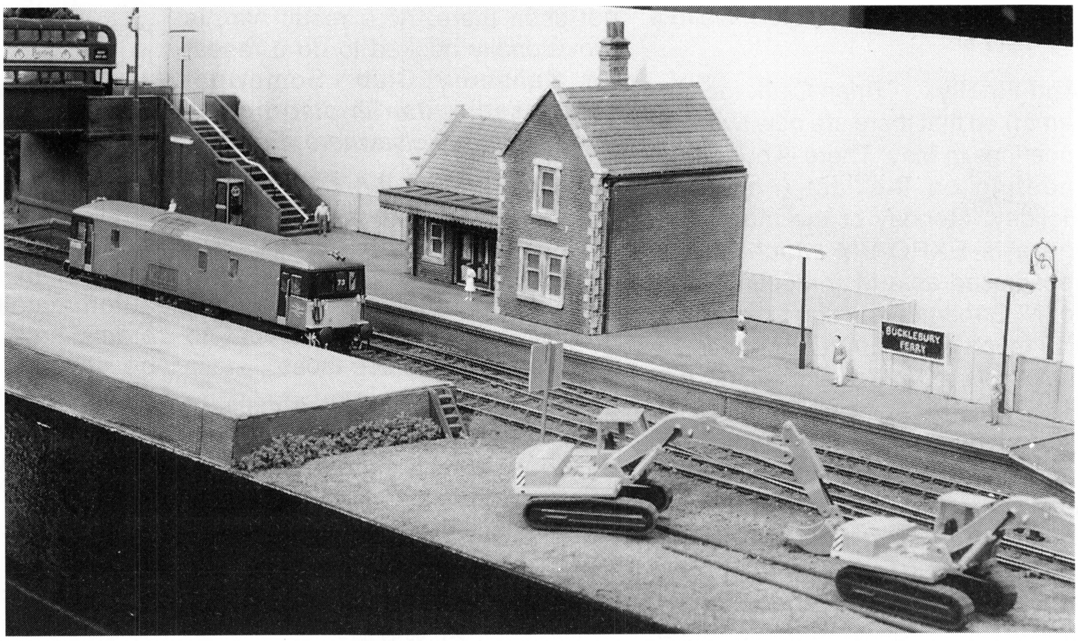
Finally, an example of the value of this medium to our overseas members - in Issue 103 of *Scalefour News* a member in California advertised for a particular book - by mid-afternoon of July 9th, the day *Scalefour News* reached most UK members, I had received two offers by phone and that evening e-mailed details to the US based member. As a result he received the book he wanted, and the vendor his payment, within 10 days of the ad's appearance. Not bad for service to a member some five or six thousand miles away. This contact with the Society is available to all who have access to e-mail facilities, and is proving particularly valuable as a quick and cheap contact for members far away from the UK. So, if you need to make contact, use it.

The URL for the Society's Web Site appears in the left hand column on page 2. *David Lane 4719*

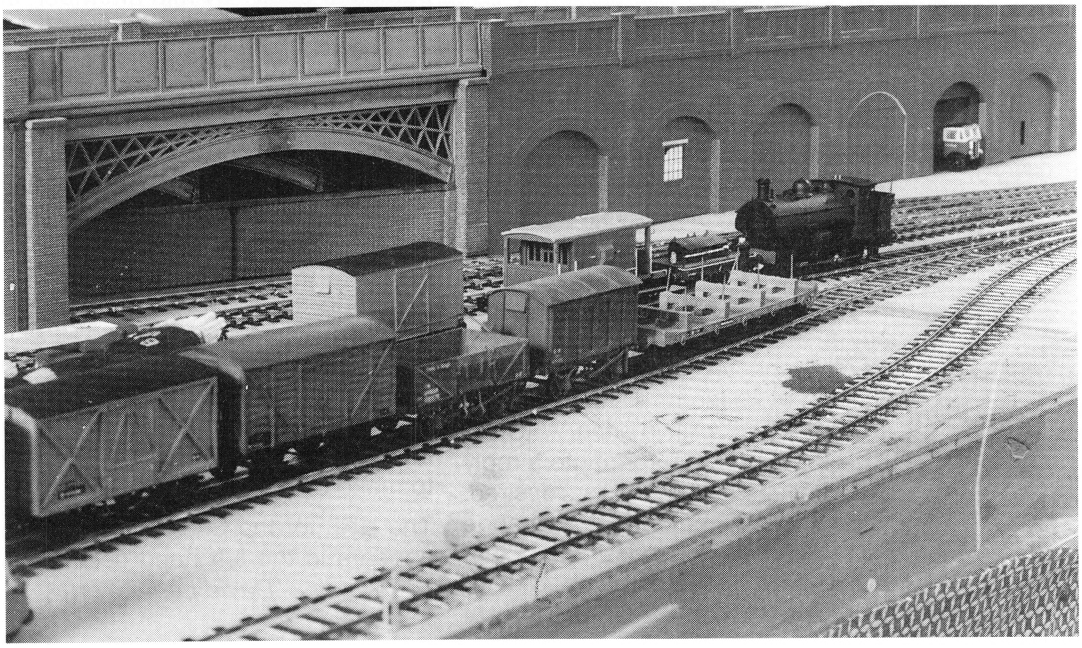
Three examples of finescale modelling as seen through Lynden Emery's camera lens at Scalefour North 1997


CARTER & SONS
GENERAL
OFFICES

A scene on Calder Bridge - winner of the Walton-Evans Trophy


BUCKLESBURY
FERRY

Modern Image on Bucklesbury Ferry & Cripple Lane Stabling Point



Freight marshalling on Fulham Imperial Road

Trade

Traders with news for inclusion in this section of this Journal are respectfully reminded to all such material should be addressed to: Allan Sibley, at 30, Swift Close, Royston, Hertfordhire, SG 8 5TA

by Allan Sibley

PLEASE NOTE

Several items arrived late this issue. Items for the Trade News should be with Allan Sibley at least one week before the deadline date, which is always published well in advance.

Brassmasters

The latest release is for an LNWR bogie trolley wagon (dia. 96). The prototypes were built in 1907 and lasted until the 1960s. They were used for carrying loads up to 40 tons and had an 18ft well. The kit is in etched brass with lost wax and whitemetal fittings, and costs £18.00 post free.

Brassmasters, PO Box 1137, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B76 1RG

Langley Models

Tony MacLellan and family have dropped the 'miniature' from the trade name, but the range continues to expand. A first (?) in 4mm scale is a kit for a cliff railway (*à la* Lynton/ Lynmouth) - who'll be the first to exhibit one in P4? Other new releases include some excellent horse-drawn vehicles, a pavilion which has potential as a rural station or roadside cafe, two types of holiday narrow boat, and almost everything you need for a model circus. To complement the existing inland waterways models there is a sheet of waterslide transfers for working canal craft, and for road vehicles there are transfers for the heavy hauliers such as Sunters, Pickfords and Wynns. These are just a few of the recent introductions - there are many more. The catalogue and price list (described as 'OO' rather than '4mm') costs £3.40.

Langley Models, 166 Three Bridges Road, Crawley, Sussex RH10 1LE

Alan Gibson

New kits now available are as follows:

4M33 LMS Patriot 4-6-0 with Fowler rivetted tender.

4M34 LMS Black 5 4-6-0, long firebox, with Stanier 4,000 gallon tender.

4M34A LMS Black 5 4-6-0, short firebox, with Stanier 4,000 gallon tender.

4M49 LMS Jubilee 4-6-0, long firebox, with Stanier 4,000 gallon tender.

4M49A LMS Jubilee 4-6-0, long firebox, with Fowler or Stanier flat-sided tender.

4M150 LMS 8F 2-8-0 with Stanier 4,000 gallon tender.

4M150A LMS 8F 2-8-0 with Fowler tender.

4M152 LMS Stanier 4,000 gallon tender (as in above kits), may be made up as rivetted, part-rivetted or welded type.

All locomotive kits feature a smokebox, boiler and firebox cast in pewter, and the etchings use a new multi-depth process which provides fewer components with more detail and a stronger model. They come complete with wheels, crankpins, etc. Only a motor is needed to complete. The loco and tender kits are £117.25 each and the tender is £31.51.

Three new wheel types are available:
4836H 3ft 8 spoke bogie,
4839H 3ft 3in 8 spoke bogie, and
4874H 6ft 2in 19 spoke PB 12in throw driver (Highland 'Loch' class).

A new motor mounting bracket has been introduced. It will accept the Mashima 1220/1224 and 1626/1628 motors, and comes with Alan's own 38:1 gears. 4L003 is for 1/8in axles and 4L003/2 for 2mm axles. Price for either is £6.20.

Many of the fittings from the LMS loco kits, and from the GCR 'Pom-Pom' 0-6-0 are now available as separate items. Too many to list here, but an SAE to Alan will bring you details.

Alan Gibson (Workshop), The Bungalow, Church Road, Lingwood, Norwich, Norfolk NR13 4TR

Red Dog

A new catalogue has arrived from Pat Mc Carthy, giving details of the current range of baseboard construction and wiring goodies. Gone is the PO Box Number - communications should now be addressed to the McCarthy home, but no callers please, as all the gubbins is at the workshop which is several miles away. The 1997/1998 catalogue cost £1.50 inc postage, but if you have the previous issue an SAE will bring you an update sheet.

Red Dog, 9 Harcourt, Bradwell, MILTON KEYNES MK13 9EN

Flexichas

Mike Sharman advises that his *Flexichas* book, as a result of increasing continental interest, has now been translated into French. It is available from him at shows and otherwise from Oakwood Press by post at £4.95. *[See the Diary for his* Credibility Gap *layout's excursion into Europe]*

SCALEFOUR STORES

The new Stores officer, Jeremy Suter, has now taken over the Stores and is awaiting your orders. One or two items to report from his emporium -

First, sadly, the Press Tool for track construction is still out of stock. Jeremy has a backlog of orders for this item, but as yet has no firm idea of when he will be able to deal with those orders.

Secondly, a bargain for the relative newcomers to 4mm finescale modelling, Iain Rice's guide, *An Introduction to 4mm Finescale Railway Modelling*, published by RailMODEL, is still available from the Stores, at a specially reduced price of £4.00, inclusive of p&p. That's a saving of £2.95 on the published price.

Finally, for this issue, Jeremy would like to hear from any of you who have experienced problems with the accuracy of wheels purchased through the Stores - some correspondence on this matter has appeared in *Scalefour News* recently, and there is, indeed, a letter in this issue from Jeremy's predecessor.

'SOURCES' DIGEST SHEET

In *Scalefour News* 103 we noised abroad the development of a *Digest* Sheet giving details of sources of trade items - response has not been exactly overwhelming, yet many of you must have knowledge of the less well-known sources of kits and bits.

Please drop a line to member Ian Allen, who is the willing volunteer, and whose address will be on the accompanying Membership List..

DIARY 1997

Key dates in the Society's calendar are scheduled below. Please send details of forthcoming events, exhibitions at which we are represented, or have P4 layouts , and Area Group activities to the Production Editor, David Lane, at 13 Park Street, Salisbury, Wilts., SP1 3AT. (Tel: 01722-327498; Fax:01722-501518; e-mail: s4soc@dial.pipex.com).

Please note change of destination above for advices of events for inclusion in this Diary.

For up-to-date details check out, if you can, the Society's 'Events' Web Page - address at foot of front cover

1997

11th Sep(Fri)	Manchester MRS - Member's Models evening at Dean Hall, Sale.
20th Sep	Leamington & Warwick MRS Autumn Show at King Edward VI School, Stratford-upon-Avon, including Grafton
27th-28th Sep	**Scaleforum 1997** - Leatherhead Leisure Centre, Leatherhead, Surrey
29th Sep	North London AG - A return visit from Iain Rice.
3rd-5th Oct	Euromodelbouw - Limburghal, Genk, Belgium, including Middlepeak
4th-5th Oct	Warley National Model Railway Exhibition at Hall 12, NEC, Birmingham, including Albion Street
4th-5th Oct	Dunkirk, France including Credibility Gap*
11th Oct (Sat)	Manchester MRS - An afternoon with Sid Stubbs at Dean Hall, Sale
11th-12th Oct	Croydon MRS Exhibition at Croydon College, Heath Clark Centre, Cooper Road, East Croydon, Surrey, with Wanborough Camp.**(Please note changed venue)**
25th Oct	Risborough & District MRC, at Aylesbury Civic Centre, with Thursford, Clapton West & Saffron Street.
25th-26th Oct	Colchester & District MRC Exhibition at Colchester, with Wanborough Camp.
25th-26th Oct	Westinghouse MRC Exhibition - Chippenham 97 - at Sports Hall of the Olympiad Leisure Centre, Chippenham, with theme of 'Pre-Group Railways', including Cheadle (NSR), Llanastr (B&M), Pulborough (LB&SCR) & Rockingham Pottery.
27th Oct	North London AG - Trader's Evening - John Edgson of Isinglass Models
8th Nov(Sat)	Manchester MRS - Exhibition Manager's Briefing
8th-9th Nov	Hampton Court MRS - Tolworth Showtrain, Recreation Centre, Tolworth, Surrey, including Middlepeak.
8th-9th Nov	Bochum, Germany including Credibility Gap*
9th Nov	In Western Canada: 'Trains '97', by 7th Div., Pacific NW Region, NMRA at Cameron Rec Center, Cameron Street, Burnaby , B.C. Canada - no specific P4 involvement mentioned but might be of interest to our members in Western Canada.
28th-30th Nov	Manchester MRS Exhibition at New Century Hall, Manchester
29th-30th Nov	Hannover, Germany including Credibility Gap*

1998

10th Jan	Manchester MRS - A Few Hours with Dave Goodwin at Dean Hall, Sale
28th-29th Mar	**Scalefour North '98** at Wakefield College, Thornes Park, Wakefield.

* Details of venues for Credibility Gap's appearances available from Mike Sharman (01793 750335) shortly prior to the date, or, as soon as made available, from the Society's Internet Web Site Diary Page (URL on front cover).

CONTACTS:

Manchester Model Railway Society - Dean Hall, Mersey Rd., Sale. Richard Syms, Tel 01925 823442 (home), 01925 834676 (work).

North London Group - St. Andrews Church, Watford, Herts. Brian Clark, Secretary, 5 Hogsdell Lane, Hertford Heath, Hertford SG13 7RN. Tel 01992 584100

For further information on Area Group events contact Area Group Organisers listed on the Society Blue Sheet.

Members are reminded that any event which includes one or more P4 standard layouts is eligible for inclusion in this Diary so, if you, or your Area Group, or local Club are involved in such an event please let us know, in good time. Diary entries can often be included after the closing date, but please bear in mind that *Scalefour News* goes to print some 6/7 weeks before the beginning of the cover month, and there are only 5 issues a year, in February, May, July, September and December, so get the timing right. Diary entries should be sent direct to David Lane - see details above.

CLOSING DATES FOR FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Issue **105** (datelined December 1997) - **11th October 1997;** and

Issue **106** (datelined February 1998) - **20th December 1997;** and

Issue **107** (datelined May 1998) - **14th March 1998;**

Issue **108** (datelined July 1998) - **23rd May 1998.**

PLEASE send your copy early for all Issues, aiming, if at all possible, for 2-3 weeks prior to copy date.

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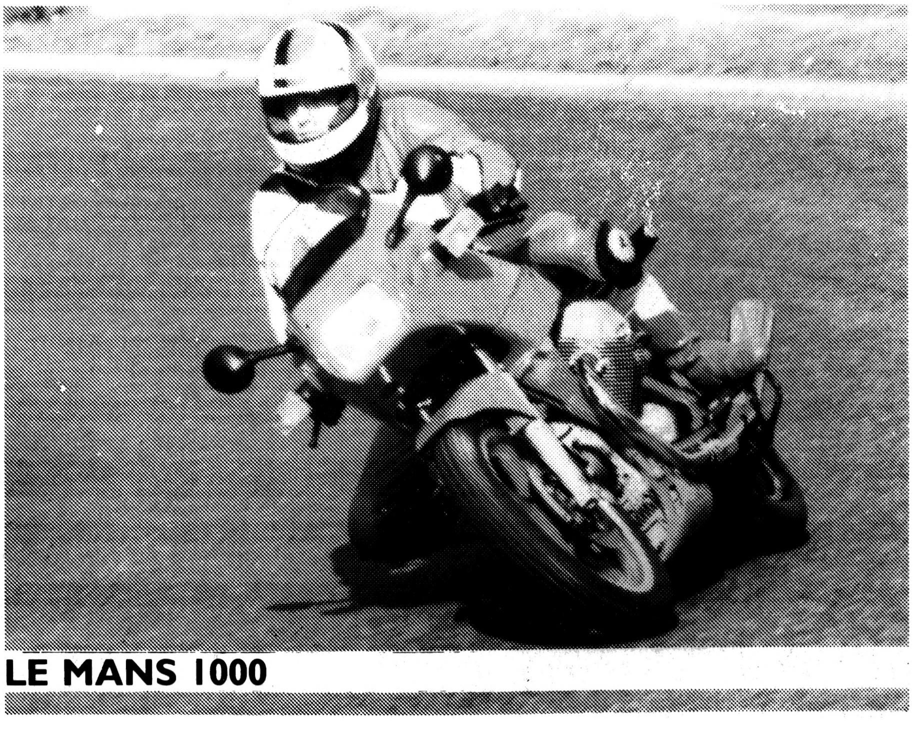

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